Hafa Adai!

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246 earn degrees at UOG commencement. PAGE 7

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# Saipan Tribune

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# ‘No sign of community transmission’

By JUSTINE NAUTA
justine_nauta@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

## » 4 passengers test positive

The CNMI’s number of positive cases jumped by four last Dec. 24 to 122, but Esther Muña, chief executive officer of the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp., assured that there are no signs of community transmissions for now.

See SIGN on Page 4

**AT A GLANCE**

As of 6pm, Dec. 24, 2020

| GUAM | OLD | NEW | TOTAL |
|---|---|---|---|
| Positive | 7,257 | 12 | 7,269 |
| Recovered | 6,707 | 36 | 6,743 |
| Active | 393 | 12 | 405 |
| Deaths | 121 | 0 | 121 |
| Cumulative Number of Persons Tested | | | 99,551 |

| SAIPAN | OLD | NEW | TOTAL |
|---|---|---|---|
| Positive | 118 | 4 | 122 |
| Traced via Travel Screening | 92 | 4 | 96 |
| Traced via Community Screening | 26 | 0 | 26 |
| Deaths | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| Cumulative Number of Persons Tested | | | 22,633* |
| Days since last community transmission | | | 132 |

*Total count includes the number of persons tested on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota. With guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, CHCC has opted not to report active and recovered cases.

Source: Joint Information Center - Guam, Commonwealth Healthcare Corp.

**COMMUNITY VULNERABILITY**

**LEGEND:**
- **Red:** Least safe
- **Orange**
- **Yellow**
- **Blue**
- **Green:** Safest

*Source: Office of the Governor*

## Thousands of PUA claimants receiving benefits

In a span of six months—from June 17, 2020 to Dec. 17, 2020—the CNMI Department of Labor has received 36,898 claims through the HireMarianas.com portal.

Of the total amount received, 18,896 claims fall under the jurisdiction of the CNMI Pandemic Unemployment Assistance program. The remaining 18,002 claims were identified as belonging to other U.S. states and territories and therefore outside the jurisdiction of the CNMI PUA program.

See PUA on Page 4

**SPICY THAI CAFE**

If you ever happened to see this new building in Puerto Rico, right across the Eloy S. Inos Peace Park, and wondered what it is, you may be pleasantly surprised to know that it will be the new location of the brand new Spicy Thai Cafe. Image shows Commonwealth Utilities Corp. workers connecting cable lines that will be the source of power for the new building. The three-story building, which was designed by Henry K. Pangelinan, incorporates a main dining area on the first floor, a commercial room-for-rent on the second floor, and a residence on the third floor. The project supervisor explained that the building is made entirely of solid concrete and was built without a single cinder block, which means it is built strong and can withstand future typhoons. The entire construction, done by Tano Group, is expected to be completed by the end of this month.

NEIL FAMA

**ONCE 2ND STIMULUS PACKAGE BILL IS ENACTED**

## DOF: 2nd stimulus checks out ASAP

FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Finance Secretary David DLG Atalig said Thursday that his team is on standby and prepared once the second stimulus bill is enacted into law.

Speaking at a radio news briefing, Atalig said they are communicating with their Internal Revenue Service partners in getting the plan and mechanism in place.

Atalig noted that they had a very successful plan in the first distribution of the stimulus package. “So we’ve some updates in terms of how we’re going to go about releasing the second stimulus should that be approved by

See DOF on Page 4

## Unemployment benefits expire for millions

By ALEXANDRA OLSON and JILL COLVIN
ASSOCIATED PRESS

**WEST PALM BEACH, Fla.** (AP)—Unemployment benefits for millions of Americans struggling to make ends meet lapsed overnight as President Donald Trump refused to signed an end-of-year COVID relief and spending bill that had been considered a done deal before his sudden objections.

The fate of the bipartisan package remained in limbo Sunday as Trump continued to demand larger COVID relief checks and complained about “pork” spending. Without the

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From ‘Wonder Woman’ to ‘Star Wars,’ Patty Jenkins’ star continues to rise and shine.
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SCAN ME WITH A COMPATIBLE QR READER TO KEEP UPDATED ON ALL THE LATEST NEWS.

# Local

## Contractor sues for breach of contract

By KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA
kimberly_bautista@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

A contractor has filed a lawsuit with the U.S District for the NMI against a former employer for failing to pay what was owed to them pursuant to their written agreement.

Peace & Order Trading Corp. is suing Fairyland Investment LLC, which is owned by Zhi Qi Shen, for breach of construction contract and unjust enrichment.

Peace & Order, through its lawyer, Colin Thompson, said that Peace & Order stopped work on the project because Fairyland refused to pay the amount owed for work that Peace & Order completed under the construction contract.

As of November, Peace & Order is entitled to damages of no less than $775,701.98, Thompson said, plus interest and attorney's fees and a mechanic's lien against the real property occupied by the apartment that Peace & Order renovated and made additional construction.

Thompson said that despite repeated requests for payment, Fairyland failed and refused to pay Peace & Order the balance due and owing pursuant to the provisions of the contract.

According to the lawsuit, Peace & Order and Fairyland executed the contract on March 31, 2018. Peace & Order was hired to remodel and build an apartment building on Navy Hill.

On Dec. 23, 2019, Peace & Order entered into two additional contracts to renovate the parking lot and fix the fire alarm system in the apartment.

The price for the first contract was $1,305,000 and the amount of the two additional contracts was $195,000, the lawsuit stated.

To date, Fairyland paid a total of $654,298.02 to Peace & Order for the first contract and $70,000 for the two additional contracts.

Fairyland acknowledged that, as of Dec. 18, 2019, it did not have issues, questions, and concerns as to the progress of the work done on the project.

Fairyland acknowledged that Peace & Order completed 75% of the work on the project and that the contractor performed all work pursuant to the contracts in a safe manner.

The lawsuit stated that Fairyland did not respond to two notices for demand of payment by Peace & Order.

## Torres urges caution in spreading info about those who test positive

FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Gov. Ralph DLG Torres is urging the public to be cautious and mindful in disseminating information in the social media about those persons who have tested positive for COVID-19.

Speaking at a radio news briefing last Thursday, Torres reiterated that the government's system to fight the pandemic has been working for 11 months now and any spread of misinformation hurts the whole community because it fosters personal assumptions and second-guessing, where some people get their own ideas on what should have been done.

"Again, you just got to respect the process. And respect those individuals that have been tested positive," he said.

This comes soon after the most recent instance when a Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. personnel tested positive for COVID-19. That personnel—considered an essential personnel—had accompanied an ill person outside the CNMI. Rampant rumors that this person had gone out to a bar with friends were shut down by the bar's management itself, which later issued a statement saying the person never went there during the period in question.

Torres reminded everyone that spreading misinformation or rumors hurt everyone.

"Always think: What if that's your family?" said the governor, adding that they had earlier cases where false information was being passed around.

"That is absolutely wrong. And it is detrimental to the family."

Torres appealed to the community to instead pray for anybody who tests positive for COVID-19 and appreciate what they've done, especially in this particular case with the essential worker.

## USCIS ending two categorical parole programs

**WASHINGTON**—In keeping with the agency's August 2019 announcement, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services announced a Federal Register notice yesterday requesting public comments on revisions to Form I-131, Application for Travel Document to remove sections relating to the Haitian Family Reunification Parole and the Filipino World War II Veterans Parole programs. The notice will formally publish on Dec. 28, and USCIS will accept public comments for 60 days. These changes will terminate the HFRP and FWVP programs when those form instruction changes are finalized.

USCIS is terminating these two categorical parole programs to be consistent with Executive Order 13767, Border Security and Immigration Enforcement Improvements and to better ensure that parole is used only on a case-by-case basis, consistent with section 212(d)(5) of the Immigration and Nationality Act, and without using preset criteria.

Parole is a mechanism that allows aliens to temporarily enter or remain in the United States, including those who are otherwise inadmissible. Categorical parole refers to programs designed to consider parole for entire groups of aliens based on preset criteria. Under both categorical parole programs, aliens with approved family-based immigrant petitions have been authorized to enter the United States and are eligible to apply for employment authorization while waiting for their green card to become available.

"Parole is to be used on a case-by-case basis for urgent humanitarian reasons or significant public benefit. With the termination of these categorical programs, any new applicants will be considered for parole consistent with the criteria that apply to any other alien seeking parole," said USCIS deputy director for Policy Joseph Edlow. "USCIS is committed to exercising this limited authority in a manner that preserves the integrity of our immigration system."

USCIS will process all pending cases under these programs to completion, and

See USCIS on Page 4

# ‘Good governance’ group formed

By JUSTINE NAUTA
justine_nauta@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

A total of 100 people came together at the Minachom Atdao pavilion in Susupe yesterday for the first meeting of a group that calls itself “Citizens for Good Governance” that wants to address CNMI-wide issues.

One of its founders, Ambrosio Ogumoro, said the organization is a non-political group that welcomes anyone to its fold. He said that yesterday’s meeting was a “fine example” of unity so they can address common issues in the CNMI.

Ogumoro, who said that a lot of people have been discouraged by recent actions of the CNMI’s current leaders, said this group was formed to send a strong message to the government to address corruption in order to create a better government for the CNMI.

“We must fight for what is right, and take action on all that is good for us, the children, and their future. Let us all unite and be strong together,” said Ogumoro, adding that the strong message has to be clear enough that the leadership has to start “putting the people first.”

“We must not give up, with one voice we will achieve our mission,” Ogumoro said. The organizers said that the group will also advocate for changes through raising awareness.

Also present at the meeting were senator-elect Edith Deleon Guerrero, representative-elect Vicente Camacho, former Office of Personnel Management executive director Isidro Seman, and Marianas Public Land Trust board member Pedro Deleon Guerrero, among others.

Rep. Tina Sablan (D-Saipan) and former representative Edwin Propst also gave brief remarks.

Sablan said that citizens are “truly the heart of any advocacy.” She added that solving the many problems within the community requires everyone. “Participate, care, speak up, get organized, one person cannot do it all, the government cannot do it all,” said Sablan.

Being a citizen means being a part of the community where there is a sense of shared responsibility for all as fellow citizens, neighbors, and for the people, Sablan said. There is a lot of things for citizens to do, whether it’s fighting corruption, fighting waste and abuse of public funds, or advocating for better health care, better schools, or better management of public lands, she added.

Propst reiterated that he will always put people first. “And that is always what it is about. Good governance requires putting people first.”

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## Commonwealth Utilities Corporation
### Office of the Executive Director

# INVITATION FOR BIDS
# CUC-IFB-21-005

## A-2, A-5 AND A-6 SEWER LIFT STATION RENOVATION

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed bids from qualified firms for the A-2, A-5 and A-6 Sewer Lift Station Renovation project in Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

The project consists of the renovation of the existing A-2, A-5 and A-6 sewer lift stations, including but not limited to the renovation of the existing generator buildings or the construction of a new generator building, the renovation or relocation of the wet wells with all new pipings, fittings, pumps, generators, and other equipment and appurtenances. The project also includes the installation of a temporary by-pass system and the relocation of existing utilities to accommodate construction activities. The work shall be done in accordance with the Project Plans and Specifications and without disruption to the daily operation of the sewer system. CUC requires the Project to be completed in ***365* calendar days** from date of award of contract.

*The project is funded by a grant from the United States of Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). The award of this project is contingent upon receipt of approval for project award from USEPA.*

Prospective Bidders must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division. The Bid Package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays, upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of $200.00 (non-refundable) for one IFB package set.

**A Pre-Bid Conference followed by site visits will be held on December 16, 2020 at 10:00 AM (ChST)** at the CUC Main Conference Room, 3rd Floor, Room No.17, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building.

**One (1) original and Five (5) copies** of the bid must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked **“CUC-IFB-21-005, A-2, A-5 and A-6 Sewer Lift Station Renovation”** to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, **no later than 10:00 AM (ChST) January 6, 2021**, at which time they will be publicly opened and read aloud. Bids mailed via postal or courier service must be received on or before due date and time or post-marked before due date and time.

Bid shall be submitted on the provided Bid Forms. Bidders are required to complete all Bid Forms. Bidders may supplement this form as appropriate. Bids will be required to be submitted under a condition of irrevocability for a period of 60 days after submission. Late submissions and conditional bids will not be considered.

Bids shall be accompanied by a bid guarantee of not less than fifteen percent (15%) of the amount of the bid. The security deposit may be in cash, certified check, cashier’s check, or bid bond executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety or other surety acceptable to the Attorney General.

A *Payment Bond* of one hundred (100%) percent and a *Performance Bond* of one hundred (100%) percent of the total bid price will be required upon the execution of the contract by the successful bidders. The Payment and Performance bond must be executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety or other surety acceptable to the Attorney General.

All insurers’ questions, concerns and qualification shall be handled by the Department of Commerce Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC). The OIC is tasked with regulating and monitoring compliance to the CNMI’s Insurance Code (Title 4, Division 7). *Bidders are required to submit a clearance from the OIC certifying their insurer of choice is in compliance with the CNMI’s Insurance Code.*

Bidders are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed pursuant to the CUC Procurement Regulations.

This Invitation for Bids does not commit CUC to the award of a contract or contracts, nor to pay any cost incurred in the preparation and submission of bids in anticipation of a contract. Bidders are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the bidders due to lack of information or understanding of the bid requirements in the course of Contractor’s preparation of a bid under the contract.

Questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from registered Proponents and must be submitted in writing **no later than 10:00 a.m. (ChST) on December 18, 2020** to Manny B. Sablan, CUC Purchasing Administrator via email address manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to Nicolette Villagomez, CUC Water & Wastewater, Engineer nicolette.villagomez@cucgov.org and Christie L. Sablan, CUC P&S, Senior Administrative Technician christie.sablan@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all bids and waive any imperfection in the bid proposal in the best interest of the government. All bids shall become the property of CUC.

GARY P. CAMACHO
Executive Director

MANNY BOYER SABLAN
Purchasing Administrator

## Commonwealth Utilities Corporation
### Office of the Executive Director

# REQUEST FOR A&E SERVICES
# CUC-RAES-21-012

## Engineering Consulting Services for CUC’s Integrated Solar Photovoltaic Energy and Battery Storage Systems

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed RAES Proposals from qualified firms for engineering consultant services for CUC’s solar photovoltaic and renewable energy systems in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

*The award of this project is under the Department of the Interior Office of Insular Affairs.*

The RAES package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of $100.00 for one RAES package set.

**One (1) original and five (5) hard copies of the AES Proposal** marked *“CUC-RAES-21-012, Engineering Consulting Services for CUC’s Integrated Solar Photovoltaic Energy and Battery Storage Systems”*, to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, **no later than December 30, 2020 at 10:00 a.m. (ChST)**. Late submissions and conditional offers will not be considered.

Discussions may be conducted with responsible proposers who submit RAES Proposal determined to be reasonably susceptible of being selected for award for the purpose of clarification and to ensure full understanding of and responsiveness to solicitation requirements. All proposers shall be accorded fair and equal treatment with respect to any opportunity for discussion. During discussions, there will be no disclosure of any information derived from the RAES Proposal submitted by competing proposers.

All proposers are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the proposer due to lack of information or understanding of the RAES requirements in the course of proposer’s preparation of the RAES under the contract. The RAES does not commit CUC to award a contract, to pay any cost incurred in the preparation of the RAES under this request, or to procure or contract for services. Proposers are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This RAES and the ensuing contract shall be executed as per the CUC Procurement Regulations.

Questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from pre-registered prospective proposers and must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on December 15, 2020** to Manny B. Sablan, CUC Purchasing Administrator, via email address manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to Anne Crockett, CUC Senior Electrical Engineer via email address anne.crocket@cucgov.org and Christie L. Sablan, Administrative Technician Senior, via email christie.sablan@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all RAES Proposals for any reason and to waive any defects in said RAES, if in its sole opinion, to do so would be in the best interest of CUC. All RAES Proposals shall become the property of CUC.

GARY P. CAMACHO
Executive Director

MANNY BOYER SABLAN
Purchasing Administrator

# Trade disturbance passes through Marianas

By KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA
kimberly_bautista@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The National Weather Service in Guam reports that winds and sea levels are expected to increase as a trade disturbance passes through the Marianas.

NWS also predicts showers to continue to increase, mainly for the CNMI while west Micronesia will see showers and thunderstorms.

Because of the trade wind disturbance, high rip currents risk remain in effect through Tuesday afternoon, bringing dangerous Portuguese men-o-war jellyfish to Marianas shores.

Rip currents can sweep even the best swimmers away from shore into deeper water while contact with Portuguese men-o-war, alive or dead, can cause extreme pain and may be fatal in some cases.

NWS advises residents to stay out of the water, especially along east-facing beaches because even if Portuguese men-o-war are not found along the beach, they could still be in the water. People should avoid coming in contact with Portuguese men-o-war that have washed up on beaches. If stung, wash the area thoroughly with salt water and try to remove any spines still lodged in the skin.

Residents are advised to swim near a lifeguard and if caught in a rip current, relax and float. Don't swim against the current. If possible, swim in the direction following the shoreline. If you are unable to escape, face the shore and call or wave for help.

## PUA

*From Page 1*

In its latest update on PUA and Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation claims in the CNMI, the CNMI DOL said that, as of Dec. 15, 2020, more than 13,801 (or 73% of CNMI claims) eligible claimants have either received benefits or are in the process of receiving benefits. The remaining 5,095 claims have been flagged for further investigation.

The actual disbursement of direct deposit or check payments occur after a payment cycle process is executed. The payment cycle process normally begins every Tuesday of each week. The first cycle occurred on July 28, 2020, with the last one occurring as recently as last Dec. 15, 2020. To date, a total of 20 payment cycles have been processed.

As of the date of this release, barring any non-payments due to claims errors, the CNMI DOL and Department of Finance is up to date with all paper check and direct deposit disbursements and are currently working on the Dec. 15, 2020, payment cycle.

The CNMI DOF also confirmed that over $170 million in PUA and FPUC benefits have been disbursed to date.

Labor Secretary Vicky Benavente stated that the CNMI DOL will continue to process claims payments for eligible claimants and work on correcting deficiencies for potentially eligible applicants.

"The disbursement of funds will definitely assist many families in the CNMI, but the work has not stopped. We must continue to manage the PUA program in strict adherence to federal statutes and regulations to prevent waste and fraud while simultaneously ensuring that every applicant has the opportunity to obtain benefits, should they qualify," said Benavente.

"Recent talks of the extension of the PUA program through the current COVID-19 relief legislation in the U.S. Congress are also being closely monitored by the CNMI Office of the Governor and CNMI DOL. As soon as we receive word regarding the extension of the PUA program from the U.S. Department of Labor, we will continue to put in the necessary administrative work to ensure that this program continues so that every eligible claimant receives continued assistance."

### Claims with errors

"Everyone can apply for PUA but not everyone will qualify. This was the mantra at the onset of the PUA program in the Marianas and it still holds true today. We are finding claims that do not meet eligibility requirements and conditions of the program but we still have an obligation to make certain that our eligibility determinations are accurate," said Benavente.

As a result of claims issues or errors, some claims have not been paid out. The department is keenly aware of this and has sought ways to expedite the eligibility determinations of those claims.

Common errors with PUA claims that have delayed disbursement or led to denials include but are not limited to:

- Not meeting eligibility requirements
- CWs and non-qualified aliens are not eligible for PUA, despite the request of the CNMI government (This may change due to pending legislation by the U.S. Congress, which is being closely monitored by the CNMI government.)
- Claimants not demonstrating that their unemployment was a result of the pandemic (e.g., claimants that were terminated due to excessive absenteeism or poor performance)
- Claimants with reduced hours disclosing that they are not unemployed
- Failing to report back to work when recalled
- Receiving sick leave
- Fraudulent misrepresentation
- Filed incomplete information (e.g., filed an initial application without submitting weekly claims certifications)
- Miscalculated earnings computation
- Wrong banking information
- Providing incorrect mailing addresses for check mail outs
- Full legal name not being properly disclosed
- Claiming for PUA benefits while earning customary (pre-pandemic) wages
- Not properly disclosing weekly earnings for the week
- Providing incorrect banking information (Routing Number, Account Number, Account Type)
- Claimants incorrectly listing themselves as the employer contact instead of official contacts (i.e., Human Resources (HR) personnel).

Individuals who file a PUA claim will receive information about their benefit rights and responsibilities. To remain eligible for PUA, individuals must continue to meet all eligibility requirements and conditions found in the PUA/FPUC Benefits Rights Information Handbook. Continued eligibility is determined on a week-by-week basis. A copy of the BRI can be obtained at www.marianaslabor.net under "Forms & Publications."

CNMI DOL continues to make itself available for inquiries and assistance with claims that need assistance. Eligible PUA claimants who need assistance are encouraged to email info@puamarianas.com or call 322-8870/8871/8872/8873/8874/8876/8877/8878/8879/8880 or 989-9190/9192/9193/9194. ***(PR)***

## DOF

*From Page 1*

President Trump," he said.

Last week, the U.S. Congress passed a bill that set aside $900 billion to renew mostly unemployment aid. The bill is linked to legislation that will fund government operations to the tune of $1.4 trillion into 2021.

President Donald Trump, however, vetoed the bill and called on lawmakers to increase direct payments for most Americans from $600 to $2,000 for individuals and $4,000 for couples. Right now, Congress is still debating whether to resubmit a new bill with the increased stimulus amounts or just override the President's veto.

Atalig said they understand that there are some issues about the amount in terms of the bill that provides $600 per qualifying adult and also includes $600 for every child.

"So we're preparing our system. We're anticipating the [signing] so that we can get these checks processed and out to our taxpayers and to our community," he said.

The secretary said there is a time lag in terms of how IRS processes stimulus checks in the territories.

"So we will be probably about two weeks behind the IRS schedule. And so I just want the community to be patient with us," said Atalig, adding that once the funds are transferred to Finance, they will be releasing the money as quickly as possible.

He said they do understand that the community needs this assistance and that they want to make sure that they get it.

In the first batch of stimulus funding, the checks provided up to $1,200 for every eligible individual, $2,400 for joint returns, and $500 for every qualifying child.

**A longer version of this story is available at www. saipantribune.com**

## BENEFITS

*From Page 1*

widespread funding provided by the massive measure, a government shutdown would occur when money runs out at 12:01am Tuesday.

"It's a chess game and we are pawns," said Lanetris Haines, a self-employed single mother of three in South Bend, Indiana, who stood to lose her $129 weekly jobless benefit unless Trump signed the package into law or succeeded in his improbable quest for changes.

Washington has been reeling since Trump turned on the deal after it had won sweeping approval in both houses of Congress and after the White House had assured Republican leaders that Trump would support it.

Instead, he assailed the bill's plan to provide $600 COVID relief checks to most Americans—insisting it should be $2,000. House Republicans swiftly rejected that idea during a rare Christmas Eve session. But Trump has not been swayed in spite of the nation being in the grip of a pandemic.

"I simply want to get our great people $2000, rather than the measly $600 that is now in the bill," Trump tweeted Saturday from Palm Beach, Florida, where he is spending the holiday. "Also, stop the billions of dollars in 'pork.'"

President-elect Joe Biden called on Trump to sign the bill immediately as the midnight Saturday deadline neared for two federal programs providing unemployment aid.

"It is the day after Christmas, and millions of families don't know if they'll be able to make ends meet because of President Donald Trump's refusal to sign an economic relief bill approved by Congress with an overwhelming and bipartisan majority," Biden said in a statement. He accused Trump of an "abdication of responsibility" that has "devastating consequences."

## SIGN

*From Page 1*

The four new cases in the CNMI were identified through travel screening and got their diagnosis confirmed either through testing upon arrival or on the fifth day after their arrival. CHCC assured that these four have been safely in quarantine and were moved to the isolation area for close monitoring. CHCC has already initiated contact tracing for the most immediate contacts of the newly confirmed cases, including passengers on the same flight.

Responding to questions about community transmission of the virus in the wake of reports that a CHCC personnel had tested positive for the virus, Muña stated in a radio briefing last week that the tools the CNMI possess have been working for many months now and that the community needs to continue to be united in the fight against COVID-19. She also cautioned against stigmatizing people who are infected with the virus.

"I saw that his picture was passed around [on social media]. He's a member of society, he's a member of this community, and we need to be mindful that he was just doing his job. It was not his fault that he got infected. We need to offer him our prayers and support and pray that he recovers," said Muña.

Muña stated that she also appreciates Far East Trading Co. Safehouse for addressing the speculations that the CHCC personnel was at their bar while he was supposed to be in quarantine.

"In this particular case, he did a job that not everybody wants to do [which is] to get on a plane and transport patients and getting to high surge areas, but he did it [and] he did it for the CNMI," said Muña. She hopes the CNMI can come together to acknowledge that he's a "health care hero" and he's no different than anyone in the CNMI.

CHCC also shut down speculations that they ran out of the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccines last Dec. 25. They said this rumor is false and disseminated this information on CHCC's social media pages.

Additionally, CHCC is asking for the public's cooperation as they assist those who are at a higher risk of contracting and/or suffering from serious illnesses due to COVID-19 exposure.

Since the vaccine comes in two doses, CHCC strongly recommends that people be present for their second vaccination, or else they will lose their priority placement if their second dose is missed. Also, if people who got their first shot are thinking of traveling, CHCC recommends making plans that ensure that they will still receive their second dose.

Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (Ind-MP) received his first COVID-19 vaccination shot last Dec. 26. "It was such a joy to see many of our elders who, like me, are 65 years and older get vaccinated themselves," said Sablan in a Facebook post.

Sablan stated that the vaccine is a good tool to "grow and attain herd immunity" in the CNMI. Sablan is confident that the vaccine will "help us begin to see our lives return to some sort of normalcy."

## USCIS

*From Page 2*

all new applications that are postmarked on or before the effective date of the new form instructions. USCIS will publish the effective date of this change as soon as timelines are finalized and could be as early as February 2021. Current parolees will maintain their current period of parole until it expires, unless it is otherwise terminated. USCIS will issue individual case notices to affected parolees to provide information about the termination of the programs and remind parolees to provide their updated mailing address, as required.

Certain HFRP or FWVP parolees who are in the United States may be eligible to adjust their status to become lawful permanent residents. Those who have not adjusted status may request re-parole by filing Form I-131 and Form I-134. Re-parole allows a parolee to remain in the United States for an additional period of authorized parole. ***(USCIS)***

## COMMUNITY BRIEFS

### Upcoming checkpoints

The Department of Public Safety will be conducting a total of two sobriety checkpoints on Tuesday, Dec. 29, 2020. The first checkpoint will be along Chalan Pale Arnold, Puerto Rico, to Chalan Pale Arnold, Cha-lan Lau Lau from 6:30pm to 8:30pm. The second checkpoint will be along Beach Road Chalan Lau Lau, to Beach Road, Chalan Piao from 9:30pm to 1:30am.

The purpose of these checkpoints is to promote public safety while increasing the awareness of the dangers of driving while under the influence of drugs, alcohol, or medication while on the island's roads. Locations of these checkpoints were predetermined based on the number of auto accidents, and impaired driving violations in these areas. ***(PR)***

### 4.8-magnitude earthquake in the Marianas

At 8:17pm on Dec. 26, 2020, a report of a 4.8-magnitude earthquake occurred in the Mariana Islands region. Currently, no tsunami warnings or advisories are issued by the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center. For more information, contact the CNMI EOC State Warning Point at 237-8000. ***(PR)***

### NMC student service hours

The Northern Marianas College is reminding the community that its admissions, finance, and financial aid offices are open for in-person consultations but COVID-19 safety measures are still in place: maintain social distance and always wear a mask/face covering on campus.

The office hours are as follows:

■ Office of Admissions and Records: 9am – 4pm, Monday to Thursday
- ❏ Email: oar@marianas.edu
- ❏ Phone: (670) 237-6770

■ Financial Aid: 9am – 4pm, Monday to Thursday
- ❏ Email: fao@marianas.edu
- ❏ Phone: (670) 237-6791

■ Finance (Cashier): 8:30am – 12pm, Monday to Thursday
- ❏ Email: catherine.villagomez@marianas.edu
- ❏ Phone: (670) 237-6813

### Updates on Pell disbursements

The NMC Financial Aid Office staff members are working to process the refund disbursements for fall 2020 Pell Grant. While the financial aid and refunds for the fall 2020 semester are being processed, students can still register for spring 2021 courses.

While attempting to register, students may find themselves on a stop list or may have a hold on their account. This may mean a couple of things:

■ There is a balance (after Pell awards are applied) in the student's account that must be paid off first before you can register. Contact the NMC Finance Office to make arrangements for payment or to execute a promissory note.

■ If the student has applied for Financial Aid such as FAFSA (Pell Grant) and did not receive an email from the Financial Aid Office indicating their Pell Grant award, then the student is most likely pending documents or FAO systems are indicating that the student did not submit an application. ***(PR)***

### Mariners missing in Marshall Islands

U.S. Coast Guard search crews are aiding Joint Rescue Coordination Center Fiji in two search and rescue missions off Kiribati. An Air Station Barbers Point HC-130 Hercules aircrew began conducting search patterns Sunday morning. At 8:57pm, Thursday, JRCC Honolulu watchstanders received agency assist requests from JRCC Fiji for three overdue mariners on a 15-foot wooden skiff off of Kiribati. JRCC Honolulu received a second agency assist request on Saturday for one mariner on a disabled 20-foot wooden skiff approximately 150-miles from the first search location. ***(USCG)***


GRANITE®

Granite Construction Co Guam has employment opportunites for the following trades for a project located in **Saipan CNMI**:

**Foremen (5)**
**Carpenters (15)**
**Masons (10)**
**Ironworkers (10)**
**Laborers (10)**

Project: FEMA Permanent Housing Construction, Saipan CNMI

**Only U.S Qualified Workers Will Be Considered**

Please pick up an application at
Room Number 239 at the Surfrider Hotel Resort,
Chalan Kanoa, Beach Road, Saipan.

Hours of Operation: 7:00 am to 4:00 pm
Telephone: 670-235-7873

**Deadline to apply is December 30, 2020**

Granite Construction Co Guam is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer of Minorities, Females, Protected Veterans, Individuals With Disabilities and is a Drug-Alcohol Free Work Place.



## Commonwealth Utilities Corporation
Office of the Executive Director

# INVITATION FOR BIDS
## CUC-IFB-20-007

### FINA SISU WATERLINE REPLACEMENT (W16-051)

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed bids from qualified firms for the Construction of Fina Sisu Waterline Replacement in Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. The project consists, in general installation of a new main waterline and lateral service line; connection to the existing waterline; relocation of water meters from private property to right-of-way, installation of gate valve assembly, flush hydrants, fire hydrants, air release valves, existing laterals service tap relocation to new main waterline, restoration of existing asphalt concrete road, restoration of existing concrete slab on grade; and other related work. The work shall be done in accordance with the Project Plans and Specifications and without disruption to the daily operation of the water system.

***This project is funded by a grant from the United Sates of Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). The award of this project is contingent upon receipt of the approval for project award from USEPA.***

CUC requires the Project to be completed in **365 calendar days** from date of award of contract.

Prospective Bidders for this IFB must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division. The Bid Package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays, upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of $200.00 (non-refundable) for one IFB package set.

A Pre-Bid Conference followed by a Site Visit is scheduled on **December 28, 2020 at 10:00 AM (ChST)** at the CUC Main Conference Room, 3rd Floor, Room No.17, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building.

**One (1) original and Five (5) hard copies** must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked **"CUC-IFB-20-007s, Fina Sisu Water Line Replacement"**, to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on January 14, 2021**, at which time they will be publicly opened and read aloud. Late submissions and conditional bids will not be considered. Bid shall be submitted on the provided Bid Forms. Bidders are required to complete all Bid Forms. Bidders may supplement the form as appropriate. Bids will be required to be submitted under a condition of irrevocability for a period of 60 days after submission. **Late submissions and conditional bids will not be considered.**

All bidders are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the bidders due to lack of information or understanding of the bid requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a bid under the contract.

Bids shall be accompanied by a bid guarantee of not less than fifteen percent (15%) of the amount of the bid. The security deposit may be in cash, certified check, cashier's check, or bid bond executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety or other surety acceptable to the Attorney General.

A *Payment Bond* of one hundred (100%) percent and a *Performance Bond* of one hundred (100%) percent of the total bid price will be required upon the execution of the contract by the successful bidders. The Payment and Performance bond must be executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety or other surety acceptable to the Attorney General.

All insurers' questions, concerns and qualification shall be handled by the Department of Commerce Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC). The OIC is tasked with regulating and monitoring compliance to the CNMI's Insurance Code (Title 4, Division 7). *Bidders are required to submit a clearance from the OIC certifying their insurer of choice is in compliance with the CNMI's Insurance Code.*

Bidders are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed pursuant to the CUC Procurement Regulations.

This Invitation for Bids does not commit CUC to the award of a contract or contracts, nor to pay any cost incurred in the preparation and submission of bids in anticipation of a contract. Bidders are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the bidders due to lack of information or understanding of the bid requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a bid under the contract.

All questions or request for clarification regarding this project must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on January 4, 2021** to Mr. Manny B. Sablan, CUC Purchasing Administrator, via email manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to Mr. Dennis Formalejo, CUC Water/Wastewater Engineer via email dennis.formalejo@cucgov.org and Ms. Chrisite L. Sablan, CUC's Senior Administrative Technician via email christie.sablan@cucgov.org .

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all bids and waive any non-material imperfection in the bid proposal in the best interest of the government. All bids shall become the property of CUC.

GARY P. CAMACHO
Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLAN
Purchasing Administrator



## Commonwealth Utilities Corporation
Office of the Executive Director

# INVITATION FOR BIDS
## CUC-IFB-21-011

### ISLEY BOOSTER II TRANSMISSION AND BOOSTER PUMP UPGRADE

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed bids from qualified firms for the Construction of Isley Booster II Transmission and Booster Pump Upgrade in Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

The project consists of upgrading of existing Isley Booster II Pump Station (IB-2); installation of new transmission line to the existing Dandan tank; rehabilitation of existing IB-2 concrete sump tank, yard piping, aboveground flowmeter and valve station with concrete pad, and all other appurtenances at the IB-2 site; construction of a new chlorine and electrical building; installation of new booster pump system (triplex system); construction of new perimeter security fencing and facility lighting; and restoration of existing asphalt concrete road. The work shall be done in accordance with the Project Plans and Specifications and without disruption to the daily operation of the water system.

***This project is funded by a grant from the United States of Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). The award of this project is contingent upon receipt of approval for project award from USEPA.***

CUC requires the Project to be completed in **300 calendar days** from date of award of contract.

Prospective Bidders for this IFB must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division. The Bid Package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays, upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of $200.00 (non-refundable) for one IFB package set.

A Pre-Bid Conference followed by site visits will be held on **December 15, 2020 at 10:00 AM (ChST)** at the CUC Main Conference Room, 3rd Floor, Room No.17, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building.

**One (1) original and Five (5) hard copies of the bid must** be submitted in a sealed envelope marked **"CUC-IFB-21-011, Isley Booster II Transmission and Booster Pump Upgrade** to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on January 05, 2021**, at which time they will be publicly opened and read aloud. Bids mailed via postal or courier service must be received on or before due date and time or post-marked before due date and time.

Bid shall be submitted on the provided Bid Forms. Bidders are required to complete all Bid Forms.

Bidders may supplement this form as appropriate. Bids will be required to be submitted under a condition of irrevocability for a period of 60 days after submission. **Late submissions and conditional bids will not be considered.**

All bidders are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the bidders due to lack of information or understanding of the bid requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a bid under the contract.

A Bid Guarantee of not less than fifteen (15%) of the total bid price shall accompany the bids. The security deposit may be in cash, certified check, cashier's check, or bid bond executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety or other surety acceptable to the Attorney General.

A Payment Bond of one hundred (100%) percent and a Performance Bond of one hundred (100%) percent of the total bid price will be required upon the execution of the contract by the successful bidders. The Payment and Performance bond must be executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety or other surety acceptable to the Attorney General.

All insurers' questions, concerns and qualification shall be handled by the Department of Commerce Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC). The OIC is tasked with regulating and monitoring compliance to the CNMI's Insurance Code (Title 4, Division 7). *Bidders are required to submit a clearance from the OIC certifying their insurer of choice is in compliance with the CNMI's Insurance Code.*

All bidders are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed pursuant to the CUC Procurement Regulations.

All questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from registered Proponents and must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 a.m. (ChST) on December 21, 2020** to Mr. Manny B. Sablan, CUC Purchasing Administrator, via email – manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to Mr. Edgar Tuazon, CUC Water/Wastewater Engineer via email edgar.tuazon@cucgov.org and Ms. Marcela Tenorio, Administrative Technician Senior via email - marcela.tenorio@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all bids and waive any non-material imperfection in the bid proposal in the best interest of the government. All bids shall become the property of CUC.

GARY P. CAMACHO
Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLAN
Purchasing Officer

# 'More needs to be done for people to avail of DPL farm plots program'

House vice speaker Rep. Lorenzo I. Deleon Guerrero (R-Saipan) has expressed wonder why so few people have availed of over 200 farm plots that the Department of Public Lands is making available to private individuals to encourage subsistence farming.

At a House session last week, Rep. Deleon Guerrero said he was surprised to learn that only 20 people have applied for the 200 farm plots that are being made available, describing it as a "great opportunity" for the community. He believes there is a need to clarify further and promote DPL's program and its role in enhancing food security or sustainability in addressing any food shortage on the islands.

DPL is making available these public lands for people who want to farm these plots. DPL is not giving them the land; it is merely making the land available for use for a minimal fee. The goal of the program is to increase the islands' food sustainability, particularly during this COVID-19 pandemic. The program is open to all CNMI citizens 18 years old and above.

Deleon Guerrero said the situation with COVID-19 pandemic could be one factor why there is not much interest in the program. Another factor is possibly a lack of public information and motivation for people to avail of this public land in order to assist the economy.

He noted that each available lot measures 100x100 meters or 1,000 square meters and it would cost an applicant only $250 a year.

"This is a great opportunity," he said. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

# Public warned of beach hazards

A beach hazards statement remains in effect through this morning, while a high risk of rip currents is expected through tomorrow afternoon. The public is also being warned of the presence of Portuguese men-o-war jellyfish. Also, a small craft advisory is in effect until 6pm today.

Based on the information received from the National Weather Service in Guam and compiled at the CNMI Emergency Operations Center State Warning Point, dangerous rip currents are present along east facing reefs of the Marianas. Rip currents can sweep even the best swimmers away from shore into deeper water.

North-through east-facing beaches in the CNMI are also vulnerable to Portuguese men-o-war. Contact with Portuguese men-o-war, alive or dead, can cause extreme pain and may be fatal in some cases. NWS Guam has received reports of Portuguese men-o-war washing up on east-facing beaches.

Residents are advised to avoid venturing out near reef lines facing east. Stay out of the water, especially along east-facing beaches. If man-o-wars are not found along the beach they could still be out in the waters. Avoid making contact with man-o-wars that have washed up on beaches. If stung, wash the area thoroughly with salt water and try to remove any spines still lodged in the skin.

East winds 20 to 25 knots and seas of 7 to 9 feet are expected in Marianas coastal waters until 6pm today. Conditions will be hazardous to small craft. Inexperienced mariners, especially those operating smaller vessels, should avoid navigating in hazardous conditions. ***(PR)***

## NOTICE OF ZONING BOARD PUBLIC HEARING

**for**

**Common Wealth Cannabis Co., LLC**

The Public is invited to attend and provide comments at a Zoning Board Public Hearing on this request for Conditional Use Permit. Common Wealth Cannabis Co., LLC is proposing to occupy and renovate a pre-existing 2-storey building structure measuring 36' (W) x 33' (L) x 12' (H) for its Cannabis Lounge Use. This use is classified as "Cannabis Lounge" and is permitted in the district as a Conditional Use. This project is located on Lot No. 001 D 13 & 001 D 14 in Garapan village. This area is zoned as Garapan Core.

A public hearing will be held on:

**Date : January 7, 2021**
**Time : 5:00 pm**
**Place : Gov. Pedro P. Tenorio Multipurpose Center, Susupe, Saipan**

Comments on the proposal may be submitted orally or in writing at the public hearing. Written comments may be submitted directly to the Zoning Office before 4:30 pm, January 6, 2021. Please send written comments via e-mail to geri.delacruz@cnmizoning.com. via US mail to Caller Box 10007, Saipan, MP 96950, or deliver them to the Zoning Office, 2nd floor, Joeten Building, Dandan, Saipan.

For questions or access to materials to be considered at the public hearing, or if you require assistance, please call 234-9661. This notice is provided pursuant to Public Law 6-32, as amended (2 CMC 7201, et seq.) and the Amended Saipan Zoning Law of 2013.

*/s/ Tatiana Babauta, Chairwoman*

## NOTICE OF ZONING BOARD PUBLIC HEARING

**for**

**Common Wealth Cannabis Co., LLC**

The Public is invited to attend and provide comments at a Zoning Board Public Hearing on this request for Conditional Use Permit. Common Wealth Cannabis Co., LLC is proposing to occupy and renovate a pre-existing 2-storey building structure measuring 36' (W) x 33' (L) x 12' (H) for its Cannabis Retail Use. This use is classified as "Cannabis Retail" and is permitted in the district as a Conditional Use. This project is located on Lot No. 001 D 13 & 001 D 14 in Garapan village. This area is zoned as Garapan Core.

A public hearing will be held on:

**Date : January 7, 2021**
**Time : 5:00 pm**
**Place : Gov. Pedro P. Tenorio Multipurpose Center, Susupe, Saipan**

Comments on the proposal may be submitted orally or in writing at the public hearing. Written comments may be submitted directly to the Zoning Office before 4:30 pm, January 6, 2021. Please send written comments via e-mail to geri.delacruz@cnmizoning.com. via US mail to Caller Box 10007, Saipan, MP 96950, or deliver them to the Zoning Office, 2nd floor, Joeten Building, Dandan, Saipan.

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*/s/ Tatiana Babauta, Chairwoman*

## NOTICE OF ZONING BOARD PUBLIC HEARING

**for**

**Lumar LLC**

The Public is invited to attend and provide comments at a Zoning Board Public Hearing on this request for Conditional Use Permit. Lumar LLC, is proposing to occupy and renovate a portion of a unit on the 2nd floor of a pre-existing 2-storey building structure measuring 40'.4" (W) x 60'.3" (W) x 12' (H) for its Cannabis Retail Use. This use is classified as "Cannabis Retail" and is permitted in the district as a Conditional Use. This project is located on Lot No. 2003-4-R3 in Chalan LauLau village. This area is zoned as Mixed Commercial.

A public hearing will be held on:

**Date : January 7, 2021**
**Time : 5:00 pm**
**Place : Gov. Pedro P. Tenorio Multipurpose Center, Susupe, Saipan**

Comments on the proposal may be submitted orally or in writing at the public hearing. Written comments may be submitted directly to the Zoning Office before 4:30 pm, January 6, 2021. Please send written comments via e-mail to geri.delacruz@cnmizoning.com. via US mail to Caller Box 10007, Saipan, MP 96950, or deliver them to the Zoning Office, 2nd floor, Joeten Building, Dandan, Saipan.

For questions or access to materials to be considered at the public hearing, or if you require assistance, please call 234-9661. This notice is provided pursuant to Public Law 6-32, as amended (2 CMC 7201, et seq.) and the Amended Saipan Zoning Law of 2013.

*/s/ Tatiana Babauta, Chairwoman*

## NOTICE OF ZONING BOARD PUBLIC HEARING

**for**

**Lumar LLC**

The Public is invited to attend and provide comments at a Zoning Board Public Hearing on this request for Conditional Use Permit. Lumar LLC, is proposing to occupy and renovate a portion of a unit on the 2nd floor of a pre-existing 2-storey building structure measuring 40'.4" (W) x 60'.3" (W) x 12' (H) for its Cannabis Farm Use. This use is classified as "Cannabis Farm" and is permitted in the district as a Conditional Use. This project is located on Lot No. 2003-4-R3 in Chalan LauLau village. This area is zoned as Mixed Commercial.

A public hearing will be held on:

**Date : January 7, 2021**
**Time : 5:00 pm**
**Place : Gov. Pedro P. Tenorio Multipurpose Center, Susupe, Saipan**

Comments on the proposal may be submitted orally or in writing at the public hearing. Written comments may be submitted directly to the Zoning Office before 4:30 pm, January 6, 2021. Please send written comments via e-mail to geri.delacruz@cnmizoning.com. via US mail to Caller Box 10007, Saipan, MP 96950, or deliver them to the Zoning Office, 2nd floor, Joeten Building, Dandan, Saipan.

For questions or access to materials to be considered at the public hearing, or if you require assistance, please call 234-9661. This notice is provided pursuant to Public Law 6-32, as amended (2 CMC 7201, et seq.) and the Amended Saipan Zoning Law of 2013.

*/s/ Tatiana Babauta, Chairwoman*

## NOTICE OF ZONING BOARD PUBLIC HEARING

**for**

**Resources Management International Corporation**

The Public is invited to attend and provide comments at a Zoning Board Public Hearing on this request for Conditional Use Permit. Resources Management International Corporation, is proposing to construct a 1-Storey office area using 1 (One) Cargo Freight Shipping Container measuring 20' (L) x 9' (W) x 10'2" (H) for its Mining Use. This use is classified as "Mining" and is permitted in the district as a Conditional Use. This project is located on Lot No. 069 A 01 in As Matuis village. This area is zoned as Industrial.

A public hearing will be held on:

**Date : January 7, 2021**
**Time : 5:00 pm**
**Place : Gov. Pedro P. Tenorio Multipurpose Center, Susupe, Saipan**

Comments on the proposal may be submitted orally or in writing at the public hearing. Written comments may be submitted directly to the Zoning Office before 4:30 pm, January 6, 2021. Please send written comments via e-mail to geri.delacruz@cnmizoning.com. via US mail to Caller Box 10007, Saipan, MP 96950, or deliver them to the Zoning Office, 2nd floor, Joeten Building, Dandan, Saipan.

For questions or access to materials to be considered at the public hearing, or if you require assistance, please call 234-9661. This notice is provided pursuant to Public Law 6-32, as amended (2 CMC 7201, et seq.) and the Amended Saipan Zoning Law of 2013.

*/s/ Tatiana Babauta, Chairwoman*

## NOTICE OF ZONING BOARD PUBLIC HEARING

**for**

**Saipan Cares for Animals CNMI, Inc.**

The Public is invited to attend and provide comments at a Zoning Board Public Hearing on this request for Conditional Use Permit. Saipan Cares for Animals CNMI, Inc., is proposing to utilize a pre-existing building structure and construct outdoor Dog Kennels with a total floor area measuring 145' (W) x 58' (L) for its Veterinary Clinic or Hospital Use. This use is classified as "Veterinary Clinic or Hospital" and is permitted in the district as a Conditional Use. This project is located on Lot No. 038 I 54 in As Gonno village. This area is zoned as Rural.

A public hearing will be held on:

**Date : January 7, 2021**
**Time : 5:00 pm**
**Place : Gov. Pedro P. Tenorio Multipurpose Center, Susupe, Saipan**

Comments on the proposal may be submitted orally or in writing at the public hearing. Written comments may be submitted directly to the Zoning Office before 4:30 pm, January 6, 2021. Please send written comments via e-mail to geri.delacruz@cnmizoning.com. via US mail to Caller Box 10007, Saipan, MP 96950, or deliver them to the Zoning Office, 2nd floor, Joeten Building, Dandan, Saipan.

For questions or access to materials to be considered at the public hearing, or if you require assistance, please call 234-9661. This notice is provided pursuant to Public Law 6-32, as amended (2 CMC 7201, et seq.) and the Amended Saipan Zoning Law of 2013.

*/s/ Tatiana Babauta, Chairwoman*

# 246 earn degrees at UOG's virtual commencement

The University of Guam conferred degrees to 246 graduates at its Fanuchånan 2020 (Fall) Commencement Ceremony yesterday.

With 85 receiving master's degrees, it was the largest number of master's degrees ever conferred by the university in a semester, more than half of which were in education specializations. Bachelor's degrees totaled 161, the majority coming from the School of Business and Public Administration.

The ceremony took place virtually and will remain accessible for viewing on the UOG Facebook page at www.facebook.com/UniversityofGuam.

"I don't have to tell this audience that these are unprecedented times and that we're all living through a historic challenge," said UOG president Thomas W. Krise. "But this class of graduates of the University of Guam has been resilient and flexible and supportive in the spirit of the CHamoru values of *chinchule'* and *inafa'maolek*."

## Valedictorian expresses importance of belonging

Class valedictorian Maya D. Nanpei found a sense of belonging and support at UOG that helped her overcome the ADHD (attention deficit hyperactivity disorder) she had struggled with in high school.

"I hope that we leave our time at UOG feeling like we belonged to something outside of ourselves and use that feeling to inspire us in future endeavors," she said.

She said graduating during a pandemic was a challenge "in a league of its own." As an English literature major, she hopes that her fellow graduates are able to find words to keep them connected with the people who matter most.

"… My time as a Triton, specifically in the English program, has taught me that words are truly what bind people together. This is especially true in our current situation, as the only way to safely express our love for one another is through words."

## Keynote hopes grads 'claim a seat at the table'

The keynote speech was delivered by Dr. Edison P. Manaloto, a two-time UOG alumnus and the 2006 UOG valedictorian who this year returned to Guam as a medical doctor at Guam Regional Medical City.

As an undergraduate, he said he proclaimed in one class that in five years, he would hold a bachelor's degree, a master's degree, and become a certified public accountant, but he remembers some of his classmates were not dreaming as big.

"The problem was not a lack of talent or skill—that is abundant—but an inherent fear to dream and to dream big. Looking back, I realized a false sense of insecurity that surrounds many of our island's youth growing up. …Many fail to see their own uniqueness and talents. They fail to claim what is rightfully theirs, which is a seat at the table."

Manaloto earned his bachelor's in accounting in 2006, a master's in public administration in 2007, both from the University of Guam, and became a CPA in 2008 as well as a certified governmental financial manager. Later, seeing the pressing need for medical professionals in Guam, he applied for medical school at De La Salle Health Sciences Institute in the Philippines and became a Doctor of Medicine in 2015 and completed his residency at the University of Hawaii this past June.

## Two earn honorary degrees

The ceremony also recognized two honorary degree recipients, awarded by the UOG Board of Regents.

"Receiving an honorary degree shows that these individuals have not only become experts in their fields, but have earned the respect of our community and made long-lasting contributions to society," Krise said.

Rosalia Fejeran Mateo, a master traditional healer—or *Yo'åmte*—for 64 years and one of the few remaining indigenous experts in her field, received the honorary degree of Master of Micronesian Traditional Knowledge. Better known as "Mama Chai," she has healed thousands of clients through herbal medicine and massage and was instrumental in opening Guam's first Traditional Healing Center at Sagan Kotturan Chamorro in 2016.

Rlene S. Steffy was awarded an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters degree. Steffy is a mass communications specialist of 42 years with a diverse career as a writer, journalist, talk show host, and documentarian. She has come to be considered one of the leading oral-history practitioners in the region, capturing the experiences of war survivors, community leaders, and traditional knowledge experts throughout Micronesia.

For complete details, visit https://url.uog.edu/commencement. ***(PR)***

# Federal financial aid available for NMC's spring 2021 semester

New college students who are looking to access federal financial aid for the Northern Marianas College's spring 2021 semester are encouraged to file a 2020-2021 Free Application for Federal Student Aid or FAFSA. Students should submit a FAFSA before the spring semester starts on Jan. 19, 2021.

Qualified students can receive up to $3,173 in federal financial aid for the spring 2021 semester. FAFSA is administered by the U.S. Department of Education. Through the program's various types of grants, loans, and scholarships, FAFSA is the largest financial aid provider in the U.S.

The FAFSA is available online at fafsa.ed.gov and can also be completed by using the myStudentAid smartphone app available for iOS and Android. NMC's school code is 015746.

To verify eligibility for Pell Grants, applicants can contact the NMC Financial Aid Office through email at fao@marianas.edu.

NMC's spring semester offers virtual and online business, education, math, nursing, and science courses. For more information about the spring 2021 semester, contact the Office of Admissions and Records at oar@marianas.edu or visit www.marianas.edu. ***(NMC)***

# NOTICE OF DISSOLUTION

**This NOTICE is published on behalf of KAMOSHITA REAL ESTATE DEVELOPMENT INC. to notify the general public that effective December 16, 2020, the Corporation was deemed dissolved as filed with Department of Commerce, Registrar of Corporation, Saipan, CNMI.**

**All persons or entities having claims against the Corporation is requested to notify the corporate office as soon as possible in writing, and mailed to: P.O. Box 5532 CHRB, Saipan, MP 96950.**

**Any claim(s) against the above-named corporation is subject to applicable CNMI time-barred laws.**

**/s/ The President**

MICHAEL A. WHITE, ESQ. F0122
THE LAW OFFICES OF MICHAEL A. WHITE, LLC
POST OFFICE BOX 5222
SAIPAN, MARIANA ISLANDS 96950
TEL: (670) 234-6547
FAX: (670) 234-9537

ATTORNEY FOR Plaintiff

**IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **BANK OF SAIPAN,** Plaintiff, | : | **CIVIL ACTION NO. 01-0044** |
| -v- | : | |
| **LUIS A. SASAMOTO** Defendant. | : | |

**NOTICE OF SALE**

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that, pursuant to a Writ of Execution issued by the Court in this matter on December 15, 2008, I will sell, at public auction, to the highest bidder, on the terms and conditions set forth hereinbelow, all of the right, title, and interest of Defendant in and to the following property:

**Legal description of the property:**
Lot no. 060 T 02, situated in Tinian, Northern Mariana Islands

**Total area of the property:**
5,000 square meters

**Known encumbrances:**
None

**Date, Time, and Place of Sale.** The sale will be held on Monday, January 18, 2021, at the hour of 1:30 p.m., at The Law Offices of Michael A. White, LLC, Joeten Center, Susupe, Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands. The sale will be open to the general public. Copies of a title insurance report for the properties are available t anu prospective bidder upon request.

**Terms and Conditions of Sale.** The Terms and Conditions of Sale may be obtained from the undersigned, either prior to or at the sale. These terms and conditions shall govern the conduct of the sale.

DATED, this 18th day of December, 2020:

/s/ MICHAEL A. WHITE, Auctioneer

# NOTICE OF ZONING BOARD PUBLIC HEARING

**for**

**Li, Shan Shan**

The Public is invited to attend and provide comments at a Zoning Board Public Hearing on this request for Conditional Use Permit. Li, Shan Shan is proposing to construct a newly built concrete structure measuring 40' (L) x 57'.10" (W) x 16'.9" (H) for its Mom and Pop Grocery Store Use. This use is classified as "Mom and Pop Grocery Store" and is permitted in the district as a Conditional Use. This project is located on Lot No. 002 G 16 in Kagman village. This area is zoned as Village Residential.

A public hearing will be held on:

**Date : January 7, 2021**
**Time : 5:00 pm**
**Place : Gov. Pedro P. Tenorio Multipurpose Center, Susupe, Saipan**

Comments on the proposal may be submitted orally or in writing at the public hearing. Written comments may be submitted directly to the Zoning Office before 4:30 pm, January 6, 2021. Please send written comments via e-mail to geri.delacruz@cnmizoning.com. via US mail to Caller Box 10007, Saipan, MP 96950, or deliver them to the Zoning Office, 2nd floor, Joeten Building, Dandan, Saipan.

For questions or access to materials to be considered at the public hearing, or if you require assistance, please call 234-9661. This notice is provided pursuant to Public Law 6-32, as amended (2 CMC 7201, et seq.) and the Amended Saipan Zoning Law of 2013.

*/s/ Tatiana Babauta, Chairwoman*

# Commonwealth Zoning Board Meeting

**Thursday, January 7, 2020 | 5:00 PM**
**Governor Pedro P. Tenorio Multipurpose Center | Susupe**
**Tel: 234-9661/2 ● Fax: 234-9666**
**www.cnmizoning.com**

## AGENDA

**A. Preliminary Matters**
1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call
3. Adoption of Agenda
4. Adoption of 12/2/2020 and 12/9/2020 Zoning Board Meeting minutes
5. Public Comments (not for items to be discussed in item B. Public Hearings)

**B. Public Hearings**

1. **Conditional Use Application #2020-3906** – Resources Management International Corporation proposes utilize public land for its Mining use and construct a 1-storey office area using cargo freight shipping containers. This use is classified as "Mining" and is permitted in the district as a conditional use. This site is located on Lot No. 069 A 01 in the village of As Matuis. This area is zoned as Industrial district.

2. **Conditional Use Application #2020-3926** – Lumar, LLC proposes to renovate and occupy a portion of a preexisting 2-storey structure for its Cannabis Retail use. This use is classified as a "Cannabis Retail" and is permitted in the district as a conditional use. This site is located on Lot No. 2003-4-R3 in the village of Chalan Laulau. This area is zoned as Mixed Commercial district.

3. **Conditional Use Application #2020-3927** – Lumar, LLC proposes to renovate and occupy a portion of a preexisting 2-storey structure for its Cannabis Farm use. This use is classified as a "Cannabis Farm" and is permitted in the district as a conditional use. This site is located on Lot No. 2003-4-R3 in the village of Chalan Laulau. This area is zoned as Mixed Commercial district.

4. **Conditional Use Application #2020-3837** – Saipan Cares for Animals CNMI, Inc. proposes to utilize a pre-existing building structure and construct outdoor Dog Kennels for its Veterinary Clinic or Hospital Use. This use is classified as "Veterinary Clinic or Hospital" and is permitted in the district as a Conditional Use. This site is located on Lot No. 038 I 54 in the Village of As Gonno. This area is zoned as Rural.

5. **Conditional Use Application #2020-3847** – Li, Shan Shan is proposing to construct a new concrete structure measuring for its Mom and Pop Grocery Store Use. This use is classified as "Mom and Pop Grocery Store" and is permitted in the district as a Conditional Use. This project is located on Lot No. 002 G 16 in Kagman village. This area is zoned as Village Residential district.

6. **Conditional Use Application #2020-4100** – Common Wealth Cannabis Co., LLC is proposing to occupy and renovate a pre-existing 2-storey building structure measuring for its Cannabis Retail Use. This use is classified as "Cannabis Retail" and is permitted in the district as a Conditional Use. This project is located on Lot No. 001 D 13 & 001 D 14 in Garapan village. This area is zoned as Garapan Core district.

7. **Conditional Use Application #2020-4101** – Common Wealth Cannabis Co., LLC is proposing to occupy and renovate a pre-existing 2-storey building structure measuring for its Cannabis Lounge Use. This use is classified as "Cannabis Lounge" and is permitted in the district as a Conditional Use. This project is located on Lot No. 001 D 13 & 001 D 14 in Garapan village. This area is zoned as Garapan Core district.

**C. New Business**
1. Tuu Group LLC Revised Plans
   i. Conditional Use Application #2584 (Retail)
   ii. Conditional Use Application #2585 (Lounge)
2. Election of 2021 Board Officers
3. Operations Reports (Permitting & Enforcement)

**D. Miscellaneous**
1. Next Meeting – February 4th
2. Other Matters

**E. Adjournment**

**In an effort to provide public access to this meeting during this pandemic, the Commonwealth Zoning Board will host this meeting via:**

**Zoom Video Communications**
Meeting Link: https://zoom.us/j/6853007492?pwd=Q0daYlNPMDdXdFlQRTQ4UkhFRjViUT09
Meeting Code: 685 300 7492

# Opinion

Hafa Adai
Saipan Tribune
THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER
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Mailing Address: PMB 34, Box 10001, Saipan, MP, 96950

**Jayvee L. Vallejera** EDITOR
jayvee_vallejera@saipantribune.com

**Mark Rabago** ASSOCIATE EDITOR
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com

MEMBER

The Associated Press | Pacific Islands News Association

EDITORIAL

## Schools should worry about kids' education, not their nail polish

More than 5,000 years ago, the warriors of Babylonia painted their fingernails with kohl to go to battle. More recently, A-list actor Brad Pitt wore nail polish, apparently just for the heck of it.

Yet for some reason, it's a showstopper when a 17-year-old male in Texas wears nail polish to school?

Granted, women have been practically the only ones decorating their nails for the last few centuries. But custom and convention are no reason for nail polish to be an exclusively female style—witness how earrings have become commonplace for men.

The real problem is schools' efforts to force traditional gender roles on students, including dictating the way boys and girls dress and groom themselves. These rules continue in many areas of the nation. It's the modern equivalent of making sure that girls play with dolls and boys with toy trucks.

Trevor Wilkinson, the aforementioned 17-year-old in the small central Texas town of Clyde, was given an in-school suspension this month for wearing nail polish, even though the school dress code allows girls to wear it. The same would be true for makeup, if Wilkinson had chosen to try that. He's started a petition to change the minds of school authorities.

But it shouldn't be up to the Clyde Consolidated Independent School District to update itself to contemporary reality, in which sexual identity is more fluid than the rigidly binary world of "he" and "she," and more people, regardless of their sexual orientation, are bending traditional gender norms in fashion, sports and lifestyle. Schools nationwide should be dropping rules that discriminate by sex, and ought to be required to do so by law or court rulings if necessary. California law protects students from these kinds of arbitrary standards, but the state is at the forefront of the issue.

The courts have generally upheld schools' authority to create and enforce dress codes, as long as those rules don't infringe on students' right to free expression, such T-shirt slogans that spell out their political beliefs. And as long as those rules are reasonable—no showing of underwear, for example—they can be a good idea.

Of course, students' stylistic choices are the last worry on most schools' minds these days. They're more focused—rightly—on whether and when to reopen campuses, how to keep kids learning from home and, once they reopen, how to keep staff and students safe from COVID-19.

Not so in the Lone Star State. Earlier this semester, a transgender high school student in eastern Texas was told she must cut her hair and make other changes to her appearance to conform with the dress code for male students.

*See SCHOOLS on Next Page*

## This holiday season, resolve to help moms and dads

**By ANGELA SAILOR and CAROLYN BOLTON**
THE HERITAGE FOUNDATION

Whatever you believe about Christmas, consider Mary and Joseph: they take on life-and-death situations and, together, raise an extraordinary son. Moms and dads in 2020, worldwide, have had a very rough year, too.

This season, let's rebuild relationships and work to preserve our heritage of a free society where we voluntarily help one another's families.

Extended family and civil society—generations working hand-in-hand—can get us through.

Unfortunately, two-parent families in America are in trouble, and kids suffer the results. More than one in three kids are raised without both parents in the home. For Black, non-Hispanic kids, that number is two in three.

"This form of family inequality leaves many working-class and poor children 'doubly disadvantaged,'" University of Virginia sociologist Brad Wilcox says. They have "less money and an absent parent."

Meanwhile, the U.S. fertility rate has been declining. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services reports another 1% decline in 2019. That's a total fertility rate of 1.7 births per mother, "another record low for the nation."

Having kids tends to track economic stability. Young people after the Great Recession of 2008 often struggled to afford the lifestyles they thought they needed for children. The extreme conditions of 2020 are likely to see a lot more decisions to put kids on hold.

And 2020 had lockdowns. Interaction with extended family and the rest of civil society went way down. But one of the best defenses against loneliness, mental illness, and financial instability is the resilience we build when surrounded by loving family members and neighbors.

If quarantines have taught us anything, it's to cherish what a healthy family can share. A family is often its own safety net.

In 2021, we have new opportunities to support families in our everyday lives and in local, state, and federal policy.

Organizations like Communio help churches develop marriage ministries tailored to their congregations and communities. In partnership with more than 50 churches and organizations in Jacksonville, Florida, Communio reduced the divorce rate by 24 percent over three years.

Policies that subsidize contraception and abortion give incentives to keep kids away. In contrast, accommodating women and men who become parents gives incentives for healthy families. Flex time and paid leave can be good choices for companies to retain their employees.

At the federal level, the Child Care Access Means Parents in School program helps colleges offer vouchers to college student-parents so that they can afford child care and stay in school. This does not have to be just a federal program — or a government program at all. A small amount of philanthropy here can go a long way.

The conversation about student loan reform also should include early-career parents. Should pregnant women and their husbands be allowed to defer their student loans until they have no children under the age of kindergarten? That breathing room could enable many more graduates to pay their debts as they build their families.

Parents and grandparents could be given larger contribution limits on flexible spending accounts for child care. The same limits could be created for health savings accounts.

Wilcox identifies additional ways to support strong families. Ending the "marriage penalty" in programs for the poor could save couples up to 32% of their annual income when they get married.

Anything that strengthens the employee side of the job market will tend to strengthen families — so rebalancing away from four-year liberal arts degrees into career and technical education makes sense. Most adults do not get a college degree, and we should not discount the dignity of any meaningful labor that supports a family.

Wilcox also recommends a civil society campaign to strengthen marriage. People who follow the "success sequence" have much better lives. About 97% of people who follow the order of education, work, marriage then parenthood are not going poor. Their kids, one day, will thank them for it.

When communities support the success sequence, teach it, preach it, and provide incentives for strong families with a strong job market, that is what we'll get. It's a great goal for 2021.

*Angela Sailor is vice president of the Feulner Institute at The Heritage Foundation. Carolyn Bolton is a senior content specialist and former newspaper reporter. Follow her on Twitter @carbolton.*

# Christmas message

*Editor's Note: The following is the Christmas message of Gov. Ralph DLG Torres. It is being published today as it was received after the Dec. 24, 2020, edition of Saipan Tribune had already gone to print.*

**By RALPH DLG TORRES**
*Special to the* Saipan Tribune

*Ralph DLG Torres is governor of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.*

Merry Christmas and happy holidays, Marianas!

Christmas reflects all that is best in our island spirit. This holiday season is always a special time of the year for rejoicing with our family and friends, for spreading charity and goodwill throughout our villages, and for giving thanks for all the blessings and little things in our lives. Despite the challenges of this unprecedented year, we are blessed and grateful to be living in one of the safest places in the United States from COVID-19. We are reminded of the hard work and goodwill being done every day by our doctors, nurses, first responders, COVID-19 Task Force, government employees, and private partners to protect our community.

To everyone who calls the Marianas home, Lt. Gov. Arnold I. Palacios and I are sincerely grateful to all of you for looking out for one another this year. It takes a home, a village, an island, and one Marianas to keep our closely-knit community safe, and we did that together against all odds. As we move forward with the vaccination of our community, we look toward achieving our common goal of rebuilding our economy and safeguarding our islands for the future.

In the spirit of the holiday season, let's look out for one another. The pandemic has been hard on all of us, but that shouldn't stop us from spreading Christmas cheer. A lot of great people in our community are leading the charge in giving gifts and meals to our children and families in need. This is part of who we are as an island community.

As we close this year, let us renew our bonds and friendships with one another and remind ourselves that we are one family working together to build a safer and more prosperous Marianas. Un familia, un guinaiya, inafa'maolek, tipiyeew.

From our families and our entire administration, we wish you all a merry Christmas and a happy new year! Please have a safe holiday season, and continue to look out for one another.

**ON THE NET**

**Torres' video message:**
https://www.facebook.com/849993848397474/posts/3798915136838649/?vh=e&d=n

# 10 reasons why Anthony Fauci was ready to be the face of the US pandemic response

*The Conversation is an independent and nonprofit source of news, analysis and commentary from academic experts.*

**By BARBARA GASTEL**
Texas A&M University

His call to "Wear a mask" tops a list of 2020's notable quotes. Brad Pitt portrayed him—and praised him—on "Saturday Night Live." Time magazine named him a 2020 guardian of the year. Amazon features seven pages of T-shirts, mugs and more emblazoned with his face.

Longtime director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases Anthony S. Fauci has been everywhere in 2020.

Although perhaps only recently a household name, Fauci is no Tony-come-lately. Over the past four decades he's played prominent roles as a scientist, physician, administrator and spokesman. You know what he's been up to over the past several months. But what of his previous nearly 80 years? And what made him the figure he has become?

## From Brooklyn to Washington

Fauci, son of a pharmacist, was born in Brooklyn on Dec. 24, 1940. He attended Regis High, a tuition-free Jesuit boys' school. Passionate about basketball, he captained the high school team—despite his height of 5 feet 7 inches.

He then attended the College of the Holy Cross, in Massachusetts, choosing a premedical major combining humanities and science. He graduated first in his class from Cornell University Medical College and went on to complete a medical residency.

The Vietnam War was underway, and male med school graduates were required to serve their country. One option was the U.S. Public Health Service, which includes the National Institutes of Health, based outside Washington, D.C. Fauci entered a highly selective training program there. He's worked at NIH essentially ever since.

At NIH, Fauci initially conducted specialized research on the immune system and related rare diseases—for example, one now termed granulomatosis with polyangiitis, in which blood vessels in the respiratory system and kidneys become inflamed. His work led to effective treatment of these previously largely fatal conditions.

## The age of AIDS

As the 1980s arrived, what came to be called AIDS emerged. Fauci soon redirected his research to focus on the new disease. He accepted the directorship of NIAID in 1984, in part to increase its emphasis on AIDS.

While continuing research and patient care, Fauci as institute director entered other realms. He testified repeatedly before Congress. He gained visibility in the media. He was confronted by AIDS activists—and eventually included them in setting priorities for developing treatments. Doing so set a precedent for involving patients in decisions about research on their diseases.

Fauci's leadership has expanded over the years. He was among the main architects of the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, or PEPFAR, a major program begun under President George W. Bush in 2003, to help control AIDS internationally. He provided leadership regarding responses to bioterrorism and to SARS, Zika and Ebola. He is a member of the Trump administration's White House Coronavirus Task Force, and he has accepted President-elect Joe Biden's invitation to serve as chief medical adviser.

## Prolific in publication

Along the way, Fauci has authored or co-authored well over 1,000 journal articles, including more than 500 about AIDS. Of the articles, strikingly many appeared in top journals such as Science, Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences and the New England Journal of Medicine. Fauci also is one of the editors of a major medical textbook.

Over the years Fauci published on topics that attest to his readiness for the coronavirus: past pandemics as well as emerging infectious diseases and how to confront them, even how to conduct clinical trials in the midst of an outbreak.

A recent study ranks Fauci as the 32nd most highly cited living researcher. His papers have been cited more than 50,000 times by other publications, and his journal articles have been mentioned tens of thousands of times in social media.

Sources of success

Clearly, Fauci is a remarkably successful scientist and a highly visible public figure. What factors seem to have contributed? Here are 10.

**1.** Smarts: Clearly Fauci is extraordinarily bright and knowledgeable. He has studied both science and humanities. The mix has fostered proficiency in lab and clinic, skill in communication and an ability to navigate the halls of power.

**2.** Integrity: "I believe I have a personal responsibility to make a positive impact on society," he has stated. "I've tried to accomplish this goal by choosing a life of public service." Strong values have directed his choices, such as that to remain at NIAID despite offers to become director of NIH or take more lucrative positions elsewhere.

**3.** Empathy: Fauci's values include concern for others' well-being. Upon being confronted by AIDS activists, he said, "I saw people who were in pain." He cared for, and about, people with AIDS even while the disease still was tremendously stigmatized.

**4.** Flexibility: Fauci can pivot. He redirected his work with the emergence of AIDS, contributing importantly to the understanding and treatment of the disease. Despite insults from AIDS activist Larry Kramer, he developed a productive alliance and warm friendship with him.

**5.** Energy: Fauci has an exceptional work ethic and is blessed with amazing energy. Account after account details the staccato pace of his ultra-long days—rising before dawn, rushing from commitment to commitment with barely a break and answering email until late at night.

**6.** Trustworthiness: Fauci has earned credibility—through research and publication, impact on patient health and long service. In his communications, his values keep him focusing on the facts. An essay in the Washington Post terms him "the singular referee the country trusts" during the pandemic.

**7.** Connections: Adviser to six U.S. presidents and the current president-elect, Fauci has abundant ties in Washington among both politicians and the media. Some science reporters have covered his work since the 1980s.

**8.** Communication: Termed "the explainer-in-chief of the coronavirus epidemic," Fauci is a master communicator. He knows how the media function. He explains clearly. He speaks in sound bites—think "we are likely going to see a surge upon a surge" of cases after the Thanksgiving holiday—and his comments are tweetable. He is accessible to the press. He listens as well as speaks.

**9.** Recognizability: Fauci has a distinctive look and voice. His name is unusual yet not unwieldy.

**10.** Teamwork: "It's almost impossible to do anything meaningful without either leading a team or being part of the team," Fauci has said. A photo of Fauci's lab group shows some 80 members, including senior researchers. Highly regarded for his mentorship, Fauci even made himself available to an undergrad writing a thesis—and then commented extensively on the finished product.

In many ways, Fauci has been the face of the fight against COVID-19 in the U.S. "If we're going to get through this, we've got to all pull together as a country," Fauci has stated. His blunt, evidence-based approach has helped make him famous in 2020. With any luck, he can lead the way to controlling COVID-19 in 2021.

*This article is republished from The Conversation under a Creative Commons license. Read the original article here: https://theconversation.com/10-reasons-why-anthony-fauci-was-ready-to-be-the-face-of-the-us-pandemic-response-150596.*

# SCHOOLS

*From Page 8*

The legal limits on gender-based dress codes aren't as clearly defined as they are for free speech. But the courts have generally held that when schools impose different dress and grooming rules based on gender, they cannot violate the Equal Protection Clause of the U.S. Constitution. According to a 2019 article in the Boston College Law Review, schools must have "persuasive reasons" for those differences in rules, which must not "perpetuate gender-based stereotypes." Otherwise, they must show that the rules are necessary for keeping the campus free of disruption.

Let's face it. The people who are most disrupted by a boy with nail polish or a transgender girl wearing a dress are the school authorities. If anything, these battles over dress and grooming do more to create controversy at schools than do the students making nontraditional fashion decisions.

If a girl's leggings distract boys—another bit of recent dress-code nonsense that discriminates against females—that's actually the boys' problem. If a boy's nail polish somehow bothers others on campus, they need to learn to get over it. It's a big world out there beyond high school, and this is a good time for students to learn to get along with diversity on many fronts. Many of those seemingly out-there fashion choices will penetrate the mainstream, just as athleisure displaced the uncomfortable world of suits, ties, nylons and high heels in many offices.

Schools might argue that they're not discriminating when they have dress rules for both boys and girls. But an increasing number of people, particularly young people, are claiming their ground to identify and present themselves in more fluid ways. Schools should stick to deciding what academics they'll learn—and to teaching kind and tolerant behavior toward all.

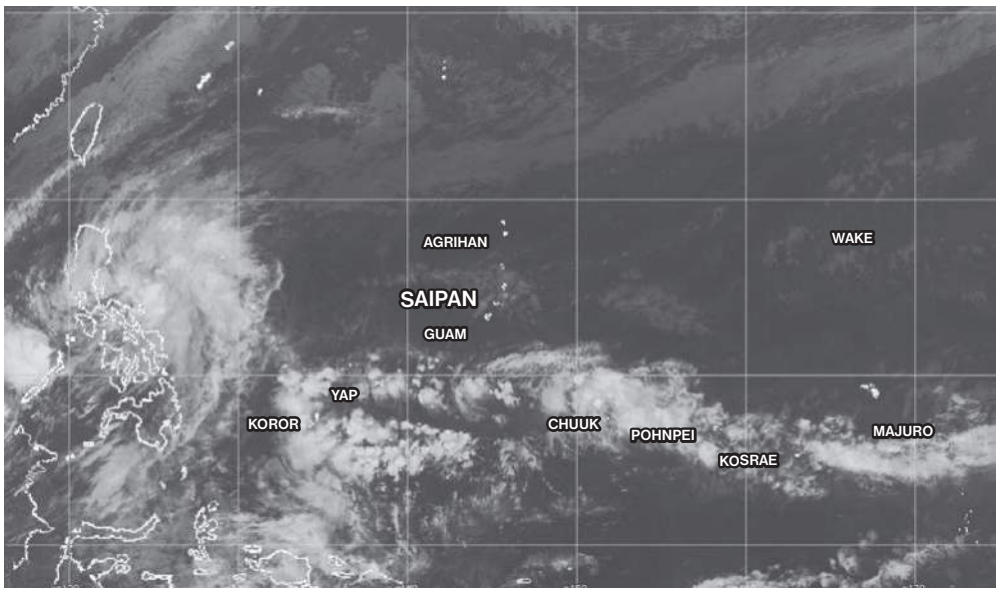
**© 2020 *Los Angeles Times***

# The Weather

## 5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN

| TODAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 15 to 20 mph. | Partly cloudy with isolated showers | Partly cloudy with isolated showers. | Mostly cloudy. Isolated showers. | Partly cloudy. Isolated showers. |
| 86º 77º | 86º 77º | 86º 77º | 87º 77º | 87º 77º |

## YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE




**PICTURE TIME: 7:46 AM, SUNDAY, DECEMBER 27, 2020**

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Dry conditions are seen across Guam and Rota while showers associated with a trade-wind disturbance approach the CNMI waters. Scatterometer data shows moderate trades across the area with buoys and altimetry indicating seas of 5 to 8 feet.

*Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/*

| MICRONESIA | | ▲ ▼ °F |
|---|---|---|
| Guam and Rota | Thunderstorms | 86º / 79º |
| Palau | Thunderstorms | 85º / 78º |
| Yap | Thunderstorms | 86º / 79º |
| Chuuk | Thunderstorms | 85º / 80º |
| Pohnpei | Thunderstorms | 85º / 77º |
| Kosrae | Thunderstorms | 86º / 78º |
| Majuro | Thunderstorms | 86º / 80º |

| AROUND THE GLOBE | | ▲ ▼ °F |
|---|---|---|
| Auckland | Thunderstorms | 72º / 63º |
| Beijing | Sunny | 50º / 27º |
| Hong Kong | Partly Cloudy | 75º / 70º |
| Honolulu | Partly Cloudy | 78º / 69º |
| London | Partly Cloudy | 48º / 45º |
| Los Angeles | Partly Cloudy | 75º / 55º |
| Manila | Thunderstorms | 86º / 75º |
| Melbourne | Mostly Cloudy | 64º / 55º |
| Miami | Thunderstorms | 80º / 67º |
| New York | Showers | 63º / 48º |
| Osaka | Partly Cloudy | 63º / 54º |
| Paris | Partly Cloudy | 50º / 46º |
| Busan | Showers | 55º / 43º |
| Rome | Showers | 57º / 41º |
| Salem | Rain | 59º / 44º |
| San Francisco | Cloudy | 56º / 48º |
| Seoul | Sunny | 46º / 25º |
| Tokyo | Sunny | 55º / 45º |
| Washington, DC | Rain | 48º / 48º |

| DAY | SUNRISE | SUNSET |
|---|---|---|
| Today | 6:41 AM | 5:56 PM |
| Tuesday | 6:41 AM | 5:56 PM |
| Wednesday | 6:42 AM | 5:56 PM |
| Thursday | 6:42 AM | 5:57 PM |
| Friday | 6:43 AM | 5:57 PM |

| DAY | MOONRISE | MOONSET | MOONRISE |
|---|---|---|---|
| Today | - | 4:46 AM | 4:20 PM |
| Friday | - | 5:39 AM | 5:09 PM |
| Saturday | - | 6:33 AM | 6:01 PM |
| Sunday | - | 7:27 AM | 6:56 PM |
| Monday | - | 8:19 AM | 7:53 PM |

| TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY | | FEET |
|---|---|---|
| 12:37 AM | Low Tide | -0.29 |
| 7:45 AM | High Tide | 1.52 |
| 12:47 PM | Low Tide | 1.01 |
| 5:46 PM | High Tide | 1.61 |

# STOP THE SPREAD

The Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. continue to encourage residents within the Marianas to practice social distancing, which means avoiding close contact with people in order to avoid catching the virus yourself and to avoid passing it on to others.

- Stay home as much as possible. Avoid unnecessary travel or public places.
- Avoid social gatherings in groups of more than 10.
- Choose drive-thru, take-out, or delivery options, or outdoor seating, if available, when dining in.
- Send only one healthy adult from the household run necessary errands, such as getting groceries or picking up medications. Leave children, elderly, and other vulnerable people at home as much as possible. When returning home from an errand, wash your hands before doing anything else.
- Older adults and people with chronic medical conditions are at higher risk of getting very sick from this illness. People at high risk should stay at home as much as possible.
- Create a household plan of action, https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/checklisthousehold-ready.html
- Ensure a 30-day supply of all medicines.

**Continue good hand hygiene**

- Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water, avoid touching your face, cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your sleeve.
- Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not readily available.

**Know the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and what to do if you become symptomatic**

- Stay home when you are sick and if you recently traveled to a place with COVID-19. Self-quarantine means:
- ❏ Choosing a room in your house that can be used to separate sick household members from others.
- ❏ Washing your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- ❏ Avoiding touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- ❏ Limiting visitors

CHCC appreciates the patience and understanding of the community at this time. To obtain general information about the CNMI COVID-19 response, contact the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force Hotline at 287-0046, 287-0489, 287-1089. These numbers are available Monday to Sunday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For medical information about COVID-19, reach out to the COVID-19 Infoline at the following numbers: 285-1672/1352. These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For mental health support and helpful tips during a crisis, call the Mental Health Support Line at 285-1856, 323-6560, 323-6561 These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30 pm. For the 24/7 Disaster Distress Helpline, call SAMSHA at 1-800-985-5990.

For more information about DIY face coverings, visit https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover.html

For more information about CHCC programs, follow CHCC on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter at @cnmichcc, check out our website at www.chcc.gov.mp or call us at (670) 234-8950.

For more information on the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force, visit www.governor.gov.mpand, follow @GovernorCNMI on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

This health advisory may be found online at http://www.chcc.gov.mp/pressrelease.html and at www.governor.gov.mp/covid-19.

**Rumor control**

During crises like this, oftentimes the spread of misinformation is just as dangerous as the virus itself. The CNMI is reminded to only share official and verified notices, press releases, and advisories from the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and CHCC.

*Source: Office of the Governor*

**NEWS DESK** For news tips, corrections and requests for news coverage, call (670) 235-NEWS (6397), 235-2440, fax 235,3740. E-mail: editor@saipantribune.com. Website:www.saipantribune.com.

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# FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF NOVEMBER 1, 2020

## DEPARTURES

**SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| UA117 | 6:55am | 7:35am | 1, 4, 6 |

**SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| UA117/183 | 6:55am | 9:50pm | 1 via Guam |

**GUAM-MANILA (MNL)**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| UA183 | 8:00pm | 9:50pm | 1, 3, 5 |

## ARRIVALS

**GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| UA174 | 5:10am | 5:51am | 1, 4, 6 |

**MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| UA184/174 | 10:40pm | 5:51am+1 | 3, 5 via Guam |

**MANILA (MNL)-GUAM**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| UA184 | 10:40pm | 4:30am+1 | 1, 3, 5 |

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

# STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

## FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF OCTOBER 8, 2020

**SAIPAN TO ROTA**

| FLIGHT # | DEPARTURE | ARRIVAL | FREQUENCY |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1301 | 8:30AM | 9:00AM | Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri |
| 1302 | 11:00AM | 11:30AM | Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri |
| 1303 | 3:30PM | 4:00PM | Mon/Wed/Fri |

**ROTA TO SAIPAN**

| FLIGHT # | DEPARTURE | ARRIVAL | FREQUENCY |
|---|---|---|---|
| 3101 | 9:30AM | 10:00AM | Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri |
| 3102 | 12:00AM | 12:30AM | Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri |
| 3103 | 4:30PM | 5:00PM | Mon/Wed/Fri |

**ROTA TO GUAM**

| FLIGHT # | DEPARTURE | ARRIVAL | FREQUENCY |
|---|---|---|---|
| 3401 | 12:15 | 12:45 | Temporarily Unavailable |

**GUAM TO ROTA**

| FLIGHT # | DEPARTURE | ARRIVAL | FREQUENCY |
|---|---|---|---|
| 4301 | 13:00 | 13:30 | Temporarily Unavailable |

**SAIPAN TO TINIAN**

| FLIGHT # | DEPARTURE | ARRIVAL | FREQUENCY |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1201 | 7:00 | 7:15 | Temporarily Unavailable |
| 1202 | 8:00 | 8:15 | Daily |
| 1203 | 9:00 | 9:15 | Daily |
| 1204 | 10:00 | 10:15 | Temporarily Unavailable |
| 1205 | 11:00 | 11:15 | Temporarily Unavailable |
| 1206 | 12:00 | 12:15 | Temporarily Unavailable |
| 1207 | 13:00 | 13:15 | Temporarily Unavailable |
| 1208 | 14:00 | 14:15 | Temporarily Unavailable |
| 1209 | 15:00 | 15:15 | Daily |
| 1210 | 16:00 | 16:15 | Daily |
| 1211 | 17:00 | 17:15 | Temporarily Unavailable |
| 1212 | 18:00 | 18:15 | Temporarily Unavailable |

**TINIAN TO SAIPAN**

| FLIGHT # | DEPARTURE | ARRIVAL | FREQUENCY |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2101 | 7:30 | 7:45 | Temporarily Unavailable |
| 2102 | 8:30 | 8:45 | Daily |
| 2103 | 9:30 | 9:45 | Daily |
| 2104 | 10:30 | 10:45 | Temporarily Unavailable |
| 2105 | 11:30 | 11:45 | Temporarily Unavailable |
| 2106 | 12:30 | 12:45 | Temporarily Unavailable |
| 2107 | 13:30 | 13:45 | Temporarily Unavailable |
| 2108 | 14:30 | 14:45 | Temporarily Unavailable |
| 2109 | 15:30 | 15:45 | Daily |
| 2110 | 16:30 | 16:45 | Daily |
| 2111 | 17:30 | 17:45 | Temporarily Unavailable |
| 2112 | 18:30 | 18:45 | Temporarily Unavailable |

# Special Feature

**Editor's Note:** *The Governor's Council of Economic Advisers' Public Private Partnership initiative has drawn widespread support from the community. Various activities have been conducted and projects have been launched to rally behind the destination enhancement campaign. This section will provide insights on how PPP supporters are committed to the program.*

GOVERNOR'S COUNCIL OF ECONOMIC ADVISERS
Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands

Together, We Can
Public Private Partnership

# 34 groups back destination enhancement initiative

GOVERNOR'S COUNCIL OF ECONOMIC ADVISERS
Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands

**Public Private Partnership Program**
**As of December 12, 2020**

| | Organization | | Site |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Marianas Association of Filipino Engineers and Architects | | A&E Consulting Services for PPP Construction Projects |
| 2. | International Roller Skates | 1. | Grotto |
| 3. | Tasi & the Ali'is | | |
| 4. | DIVEWISH | | |
| 5. | Loco & Taco Dining Bar | | |
| 6. | Bibong Corp. (Mariana Lighthouse) | | |
| 7. | P&A Corporation | 2. | Korean Peace Memorial |
| 8. | Marianas Racing Association | 3. | Cowtown |
| 9. | Tan Holdings/Tan Siu Lin Foundation | 4. | Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium |
| | | | Directional and Location Signages |
| | | 5. | Bird Island Lookout |
| | | 6. | Gov. Froilan C. Tenorio Beach Road Pathway |
| 10. | Kanoa Football Club | 7. | Garapan Core Highway Medians |
| 11. | Beach Road Tourism Development, Inc. | | |
| 12. | E-Land Group | 8. | Pau Pau Beach |
| 13. | Bridge Capital LLC | 9. | Garapan Central Park |
| 14. | Rotary Club of Saipan | 10. | Suicide Cliff |
| 15. | Emon Masonic Lodge 179 | | |
| 16. | Rota Mayor's Office | 11. – 12. | Benita Manglona Buildings (Songsong Village) Mendiola Park |
| 17. | FilCorp | | |
| 18. | Rota Merchandising, DK Brothers | | |
| 19. | Hotel Valentino *in partnership with Rota Mayor's Office, FilCorp, Rota Merchandising, DK Brothers, CPA-Rota | 13. | Airport Road |
| 20. | Commonwealth Ports Authority - Rota | | |
| 21. | Lions Club International District 204, Region 2 | 14. | Sugar Dock Beach |
| 22. | Commonwealth Ports Authority - Saipan | 15. | Airport Access Road |
| 23. | Airport Operators Committee | | |
| 24. | POI Aviation | | |
| 25. | Triathlon Association of CNMI | 16. | North Trails |
| 26. | NMI Cycling Federation | | |
| 27. | CTSI Logistics | 17. | Ladder Beach |
| 28. | Northern Mariana Islands Football Association | 18. | Koblerville Village |
| 29. | United Filipino Organization | 19. | San Isidro Beach Park / Laly 4 |
| 30. | Triple J Enterprises, Inc. | | |
| 31. | Korean Community of Saipan | 20. | Micro Beach |
| 32. | Kanoa Resort Saipan | 21. | Susupe Beach Park |
| 33. | Chinese Association of Saipan | | |
| 34. | Palauan Community Association of the CNMI | 22. | Naftan Point |

The COVID-19 pandemic may have crushed the CNMI's hopes for economic growth in 2020, but not the team spirit that the island community has shown for the past several months to get through this crisis and beyond.

From the initial 10 groups, 34 have now come together to support the Public Private Partnership initiative of the Governor's Council of Economic Advisers, with the adoption of 22 sites that will receive some major TLC [tender loving care] to prepare them when tourism to the CNMI resumes. GCEA and its partners see this initiative as a game-changer in the NMI's bid to be a world-class destination and revitalize the tourism industry—the driving force of the islands' economy that was hit hard by the pandemic.

"This downtime due to the pandemic gave us the opportunity to look at the improvements we must do in our sites and other key areas in our islands to make the CNMI better prepared in welcoming back visitors. We are excited with all these enhancement and beautification projects and we would like to thank our entire community for rallying behind this campaign," said Gov. Ralph DLG Torres, who co-chairs the GCEA with Jerry Tan.

Business establishments, government agencies, sports federations, non-government organizations, and ethnic groups have signed a five-year agreement with the PPP initiative and part of their commitment to the campaign is doing maintenance work at their adopted sites. Majority of these groups have been holding regular cleanup drives since August. They also did both minor and major repairs on facilities/features in their respective sites, with plans for future projects.

Through the collaborative efforts of the 34 groups and other stakeholders that are being encouraged to join the cause, GCEA is positive that the CNMI will be able to showcase more the beauty of the islands, its rich culture, and the hospitality of its people. With everyone contributing to this initiative, GCEA is hopeful that CNMI tourism can ramp back up and regenerate the jobs and tax revenues we need to get through the pandemic and gain momentum toward building a stronger economy that benefits all.

"We, as one community, have proven time and again that we can overcome challenges. We did it when we had Soudelor and Yutu. Now, we have this pandemic and we will all come out of this stronger and better. Together, we can CNMI," Torres said. ***(PR)***

# Business

## Docomo Pacific backs hygiene supply drive

**TAMUNING, Guam**—Docomo Pacific, regional leader in innovation, telecommunications, and entertainment, supports Mañe'lu's first Holiday Hygiene Supply Drive.

The coronavirus pandemic has brought forth the ongoing need of PPEs, such as face masks and hand sanitizers, as preventative measures to stay healthy and clear of spread. These basic hygiene supplies are often overlooked essential items that families facing adversity struggle to purchase. Mañe'lu, in partnership with multiple local businesses, initiated this community effort to benefit the under-severed youth and families around the island, as well as the homeless community.

The drive runs from Dec. 1 through Dec. 28. If you would like to contribute to the drive, there are multiple locations you can visit ***(see picture)***.

Docomo Pacific is a wholly owned subsidiary of NTT Docomo, Japan's leading mobile operator. Headquartered in Tamuning, Guam, Docomo Pacific is the largest provider of personal, residential, enterprise connectivity and entertainment services in Guam and the Northern Mariana Islands. Named Guam's most reliable network, based on GWS' 2019 OneScore ranking. We are also the 5-time winner of Pika's Best of Guam and 4-time winner of Best of The Pacific. Docomo Pacific is dedicated to bringing you and your family closer to the things that matter most. Get to know more about what makes us "Better Together" at www.docomopacific.com. ***(PR)***

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Century 21 Realty Management Co., Inc. employees receive Docomo Pacific's donation of facemasks and hand sanitizers.

## Holiday sales tick up as shoppers invest in their homes

**NEW YORK** (AP)—Retail sales increased a modest 3% during a longer holiday season this year, as homebound shoppers spent more on furnishing and food but less on clothing and jewelry, according to figures released Saturday by a firm that tracks all forms of payments.

The increase fell short of predictions from the National Retail Federation, the nation's largest retail trade group, which had expected sales to rise between 3.6% and 5.2% this year compared to 2019.

As expected, a surge in online shopping fueled much of spending. Online sales rose a record 49% year-over-year between Oct. 11 and Dec. 24, according to the Mastercard SpendingPulse figures, which exclude services, automotive and gasoline sales.

The holiday shopping season was considered longer this year as retailers offered promotions sooner and encouraged customers to get a jump-start to avoid delivery delays. During the traditional holiday period, between Nov. 1 and Dec. 24, retail sales rose 2.4% year-over-year, according to Mastercard's data.

Steve Sadove, senior advisor for Mastercard and former CEO and Chairman of Saks Incorporated, said the surge in online spending and the early shopping was "a testament to the holiday season and strength of retailers and consumers alike."

Buying trends benefited e-commerce giant Amazon and big-box stores like Target and Walmart, which already had robust e-commerce operations and were allowed to stay open during the pandemic, attracting shoppers who wanted to avoid visiting multiple stores.

But the pandemic has been detrimental for smaller shops, clothing brands and department stores, which had already been struggling to adapt to the rise of online shopping. Already, more than 40 U.S. retailers have filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection since the pandemic started forcing shutdowns in March.

Holiday department store sales fell 10.2% year-over-year, according to Mastercard. Spending on apparel plunged 19.1%, and jewelry sales fell 2.3%.

Shoppers instead invested in their homes. Furniture and furnishing sales increased 16.2%, while spending on home improvement rose 14.1%. Consumers also favored electronics and appliances, a category where sales rose 6%.

Clothing stores and specialty retailers offered big discounts and promoted curbside pickup in the hopes of rescuing the holiday season and surviving a difficult year. There was some payoff, as online clothing sales rose 15.7%, according to Mastercard. E-commerce sales at department stores also ticked up 3.3%.

# Nation

### AS COVID RELIEF HANGS IN BALANCE

## Trump golfs in Florida

**PALM BEACH, Fla.** (AP)—President Donald Trump spent his Christmas golfing in Florida as a government shutdown looms and COVID relief hangs in the balance.

Trump, at his Mar-a-Lago club in Palm Beach for the holidays, had no events on his public schedule after throwing the future of a massive COVID relief and government funding bill into question. Failure to sign the bill, which arrived in Florida on Thursday night, could deny relief checks to millions of Americans on the brink and force a government shutdown in the midst of the pandemic.

The White House declined to share details of the president's schedule. It said only: "During the Holiday season, President Trump will continue to work tirelessly for the American People. His schedule includes many meetings and calls."

Trump's expected golf partner Friday was South Carolina Sen. Lindsey Graham, a close ally.

Trump's vacation came as Washington was still reeling over his surprise, eleventh-hour demand that an end-of-year spending bill that congressional leaders spent months negotiating give most Americans $2,000 COVID relief checks—far more than the $600 members of his own party had agreed to. The idea was swiftly rejected by House Republicans during a rare Christmas Eve session, leaving the proposal in limbo.

The bipartisan compromise had been considered a done deal and had won sweeping approval in the House and Senate this week after the White House assured GOP leaders that Trump supported it. If he refuses to sign the deal, which is attached to a $1.4 trillion government funding bill, it will force a federal government shutdown, in addition to delaying aid checks and halting unemployment benefits and eviction protections in the most dire stretch of the pandemic.

Trump's decision to attack the bill has been seen, at least in part, as political punishment for what he considers insufficient backing by congressional Republicans of his campaign to overturn the results of the Nov. 3 election with unfounded claims of voter fraud.

"At a meeting in Florida today, everyone was asking why aren't the Republicans up in arms & fighting over the fact that the Democrats stole the rigged presidential election?" Trump tweeted Thursday.

"I will NEVER FORGET!" he later added.

Trump for weeks now has refused to accept the results of the election and has been pushing new, increasingly outrageous schemes to try to overturn the results. He has been egged on by allies like his lawyer, former New York mayor Rudy Giuliani, who accompanied the president to Florida aboard Air Force One.

Trump has provided no credible evidence to support his election claims, which have been refuted by a long list of officials, among them judges, former Attorney General William Barr, Republican governors and local election administrators.

## FBI at home of possible person of interest in Nashville bomb

**NASHVILLE, Tenn.** (AP)—Federal agents converged Saturday on the home of a possible person of interest in the explosion that rocked downtown Nashville as investigators scoured hundreds of tips and leads in the blast that damaged dozens of buildings on Christmas morning.

More than 24 hours after the explosion, a motive remained elusive as investigators worked round-the-clock to resolve unanswered questions about a recreational vehicle that blew up on a mostly deserted street on a sleepy holiday morning and was prefaced by a recorded warning advising those nearby to evacuate. The attack, which damaged an AT&T building, continued to wreak havoc Saturday on cellphone service and police and hospital communications in several Southern states.

Investigators from multiple federal and local law enforcement agencies were at a home in Antioch, in suburban Nashville, after receiving information relevant to the investigation, said FBI Special Agent Jason Pack. Another law enforcement official, who was not authorized to discuss an ongoing investigation and spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity, said investigators regard a person associated with the property as a person of interest.

Federal agents could be seen looking around the property, searching the home and the backyard. A Google Maps image had shown a similar recreational vehicle parked in the backyard when the photo was captured in May 2019; an AP reporter at the scene did not see the vehicle at the property in the late afternoon Saturday.

There were other signs of progress in the investigation, as the FBI revealed that it was looking at a number of individuals who may be connected to it. Officials also said no additional explosive devices have been found—indicating no active threat to the area. Investigators have received around 500 tips and leads.

"It's just going to take us some time," Douglas Korneski, the special agent in charge in charge of the FBI's Memphis field office, said at a Saturday afternoon news conference. "Our investigative team is turning over every stone" to understand who did this and why.

Beyond that, the only known casualties were three injured people. The infrastructure damage, meanwhile, was broadly felt, due to an AT&T central office being affected by the blast. Police emergency systems in Tennessee, Kentucky and Alabama, as well as Nashville's COVID-19 community hotline and a handful of hospital systems, remained out of service.

The building contained a telephone exchange, with network equipment in it—but the company has declined to say exactly how many people have been impacted.

Asked whether the AT&T building could have been a possible target, Korneski said, "We're looking at every possible motive that could be involved."

Investigators shut down the heart of downtown Nashville's tourist scene—an area packed with honky-tonks, restaurants and shops—as they shuffled through broken glass and damaged buildings to learn more about the explosion.

# World

## Chinese vaccines are poised to fill gap, but will they work?

**TAIPEI, Taiwan** (AP)—With rich countries snapping up supplies of COVID-19 vaccines, some parts of the world may have to rely on Chinese-developed shots to try to conquer the outbreak. The question: Will they work?

There is no outward reason to believe they won't, but China has a history of vaccine scandals, and its drugmakers have revealed little about their final human trials and the more than 1 million emergency-use inoculations they say have been carried out inside the country already.

Wealthy nations have reserved about 9 billion of the 12 billion mostly Western-developed shots expected to be produced next year, while COVAX, a global effort to ensure equal access to COVID-19 vaccines, has fallen short of its promised capacity of 2 billion doses.

For those countries that have not yet secured a vaccine, China may be the only solution.

China has six candidates in the last stage of trials and is one of the few nations that can manufacture vaccine on a large scale. Government officials have announced a capacity of 1 billion doses next year, with President Xi Jinping vowing China's vaccines will be a boon to the world.

The potential use of its vaccine by millions of people in other countries gives China an opportunity both to repair the damage to its reputation from an outbreak that escaped its borders and to show the world it can be a major scientific player.

Yet past scandals have damaged its own citizens' trust in its vaccines, with manufacturing and supply chain problems casting doubt on whether it can really be a savior.

"A question mark remains over how China can ensure the delivery of reliable vaccines," said Joy Zhang, a professor who studies the ethics of emerging science at the University of Kent in Britain. She cited China's "non-transparency over scientific data and a troubled history with vaccine delivery."

Bahrain last week became the second country to approve a Chinese COVID-19 vaccine, joining the United Arab Emirates. Morocco plans to use Chinese vaccines in a mass immunization campaign slated to start this month. Chinese vaccines are also awaiting approval in Turkey, Indonesia and Brazil, while testing continues in more than a dozen countries, including Russia, Egypt and Mexico.

In some countries, Chinese vaccines are viewed with suspicion. Brazil's President Jair Bolsonaro has repeatedly sown doubt about the effectiveness of Chinese company Sinovac's vaccine candidate without citing any evidence, and said Brazilians won't be used as "guinea pigs."

Many experts praise China's vaccine capabilities.

"The studies look to be well done," said Jamie Triccas, head of immunology and infectious diseases at the University of Sydney's medical school, referring to clinical trial results published in scientific journals. "I wouldn't be overly concerned about that."

China has been building up its immunization programs for more than a decade. It has produced successful vaccines on a large scale for its own population, including vaccinations for measles and hepatitis, said Jin Dong-yan, a medical professor at the University of Hong Kong.

## Millions faced with new UK virus restrictions; border chaos eases

**LONDON** (AP)—Millions of people in the U.K. faced tough new coronavirus restrictions Saturday, with Scotland and Northern Ireland demanding tighter measures to try to halt a new variant of the virus that is believed to spread more quickly.

Northern Ireland went into a six-week lockdown and in Wales, restrictions that were relaxed for Christmas Day were also re-imposed.

The number of people under England's top level of restrictions—Tier 4—increased by 6 million on Saturday to 24 million people overall, around 43% of England's population. The region included London and many of its surrounding areas.

No indoor mixing of households is allowed, and only essential travel permitted. Gyms, pools, hairdressers and stores selling nonessential goods have been ordered to close and pubs and restaurants can only do takeout. Business groups say the restrictions will be economically devastating to their members.

Another 570 daily deaths from COVID-19 were reported, bringing Britain's total death toll to 70,195, the second-worst death toll in Europe after Italy. Britain also reported more than 32,700 new cases of the disease on Christmas Day.

Fears about the U.K.'s new variant have sparked a week of border chaos. Around 1,000 British soldiers spent Christmas Day trying to clear a huge backlog of trucks stranded in southeast England after France briefly closed its border to the U.K. and demanded coronavirus tests from all drivers.

But Britain's Transport Secretary Grant Shapps said Saturday that more than 15,000 drivers had been tested and that the backlog at a testing site at Manston Airport was cleared by Sunday morning. Only 36 positive tests had been reported, he said on Twitter.

"A massive THANK YOU to everyone who's worked tirelessly over the past few days to reduce the huge disruption caused by the sudden French border closure," Shapps tweeted.

The first cases of the U.K.'s new variant have now been detected in France and Spain. A French man living in England arrived in France on Dec. 19 and tested positive for the new variant Friday, the French public health agency said. He has no symptoms and is isolating at his home in the central city of Tours.

Meanwhile, health authorities in the Madrid region said they had confirmed the U.K. variant in four people, all of whom are in good health. Regional health chief Enrique Ruiz Escudero said the new strain had arrived when an infected person flew into Madrid's airport.

In her annual Christmas address, Queen Elizabeth II, who has spent much of the year isolating at Windsor Castle with her husband Prince Philip, delivered a heartfelt message of hope praising the "indomitable spirit" of those who have risen "magnificently" to the challenges of the pandemic.

The 94-year-old queen and her 99-year-old husband Prince Philip were setting an example by not visiting relatives as usual over Christmas.


*In Loving Memory of*

†EMILIA CHONG SABLAN

*Born on October 07, 1944*

*Was called to her eternal rest by Our Dear Lord on December 20, 2020.*

**IN HER NEW LIFE, SHE NOW JOINS HER:**

**Mother:** †Maria Santos Lujan Chong Lizama
**Father:** †Jose Chong
**Step-Father:** †Jose Quitugua Lizama
**Mother in-law:** †Rosa San Nicholas Sablan
**Father in-law:** †Eulogio Torres Sablan
**Sister in-law:** †Rita Diaz Sablan

**HER MEMORIES WILL LIVE IN THE HEARTS OF HER:**

Husband: **Miguel E. Sablan**
Children: **Michael C. Sablan**
**Stephen C.** & Marissa A. Sablan: *Kiyannah A. & Geoffrey S. Cruz (Brinae, Moeisha, Lorenzo & Kayden) and Aubriana Maria*
**Nicollette C. Sablan** & Joseph D. Gonzales: *Javian Zachary, Emily Jade, Ha'ani Rosa, and Raegan Jolette*
Sister: **Tomasa C.** & Luis T. Camacho and Family

**BROTHERS & SISTERS and SPOUSES:**

**†Jesus L.** /†Josepha S. Chong & Family
**†Ernesta C.** /†Lorenzo M. Ayuyu & Family
**†Dr. Jose L.** /†Ramona S. Chong & Family
**†Manuel L.** /†Esperanza C. Chong & Family
**†Joaquin L.** /†Ana T. Chong & Family
**†Francisco L. Chong**
**†Luis L. Chong**

**BROTHER & SISTER IN LAWS and SPOUSES:**

**†Herman S.** /Rita F. Sablan & Family
**Margarita S.** /Richard Dunn & Family
**Rosalia S.** /Bill Owens & Family
**Fermina S.** /Carlton Ihlan & Family
**Eugenio S.** /Carmela S. Sablan & Family
**Norbert S.** /Jean F. Sablan & Family

*She will be missed by numerous Nieces, Nephews, Godchildren, Relatives and Friends.*

**Daily Mass is being offered at**

12/21-12/29: 6:00am at Mt. Carmel Cathedral church in Chalan Kanoa
12/21-12/29: 5:30am; 12/25: 8:00am; 12/27: 6:00am, 8:00am & 10:00am
12/28-12/30 6:00pm at St. Jude Church in Koblerville
12/26-12/29: 6:00pm at San Antonio Church

Funeral services will be held on Wednesday, December 30, 2020 at Borja Funeral home. Rosary will begin at 8:30am. Viewing will begin at 9:00am to 10:00am followed by a Liturgy and after she will be cremated and buried at Mt. Carmel Cemetary.

**For viewing please observe social distancing and wear facial mask.**
**Your cooperation and understanding is greatly appreciated.**

*Thank you —Si Yu'us Ma'asi'*

**Miguel E. Sablan & Family**

# Health & Wellness

This advertorial is sponsored by Tan Holdings HEALTH IS WEALTH Tan Siu Lin Foundation

## MAYO CLINIC Q AND A

# COVID-19 vaccine myths

**DEAR MAYO CLINIC: There has been a lot of news coverage about the COVID-19 vaccines recently developed and now being administered across the U.S.**

**But with so much information out there, I'm confused about whether these vaccines will be safe. Could you address some of my concerns?**

**ANSWER:** As the COVID-19 pandemic has continued around the world, the brightest hope for ending the pandemic has been the vaccines being developed and administered. People have been sharing a lot of claims and misinformation, and this may make you hesitant as to whether these COVID-19 vaccines are safe and effective.

Below are the top myths and facts about COVID-19 vaccines:

**Myth:** The COVID-19 vaccine isn't safe because it was rapidly developed.

**Fact:** Many pharmaceutical companies invested significant resources into quickly developing a vaccine for COVID-19 because of the worldwide effects of the pandemic. The emergency situation warranted an emergency response, but that doesn't mean that companies bypassed safety protocols or performed inadequate testing.

Mayo Clinic recommends the use of vaccines that we are confident are safe. While there are many COVID-19 vaccine candidates in development, the Pfizer vaccine is the first authorized for emergency use by the FDA. This vaccine was created using new technology based on the molecular structure of the virus that allows it to be free from materials of animal origin and synthesized by an efficient, cell-free process without preservatives. This vaccine developed by Pfizer/BioNTecH has been studied in approximately 43,000 people.

To receive emergency use authorization, the biopharmaceutical manufacturer must have followed at least half of the study participants for at least two months after completing the vaccination series, and the vaccine must be proven safe and effective in that population.

In addition to the safety review by the FDA, the Advisory Committee on Immunization has convened a panel of experts to independently evaluate the safety data from the clinical trial. Mayo Clinic vaccine experts also will review the available data. The safety of COVID-19 vaccines will continue to be closely monitored by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the FDA.

**Myth:** I already had COVID-19, so I don't need to get the vaccine.

JACQUELYN MARTIN/POOL/GETTY IMAGES/TNS

Nurse Lillian Wirpsza (R) administers a COVID-19 vaccine to Shylee Stewart, a labor and delivery nurse at George Washington University Hospital on December 14, 2020 in Washington, DC. U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar and U.S. Surgeon General Dr. Jerome Adams are observing hospital workers being vaccinated.

**Fact:** There is not enough information currently available to say if or for how long after infection someone is protected from getting COVID-19 again. This is called natural immunity. Early evidence suggests natural immunity from COVID-19 may not last very long, but more studies are needed.

Mayo Clinic recommends getting the COVID-19 vaccine even if you've had COVID-19 previously. However, those who have had COVID-19 should delay vaccination until about 90 days from diagnosis. People should not get vaccinated if in quarantine after exposure or if they have COVID-19 symptoms.

**Myth:** There are severe side effects of the COVID-19 vaccines.

**Fact:** COVID-19 vaccines have been shown to have short-term mild or moderate vaccine reactions that resolve without complication or injury.

The early phase studies of the Pfizer vaccine show that it is safe. About 15% of people developed short-lived symptoms at the site of the injection. Half developed systemic reactions, primarily headache, chills, fatigue or muscle pain or fever lasting a day or two.

Keep in mind that these side effects indicate that your immune system is responding to the vaccine and are common when receiving vaccines.

**Myth:** I won't need to wear a mask after I get the COVID-19 vaccine.

**Fact:** It may take time for everyone who wants a COVID-19 vaccination to get one. Also, while the vaccine may prevent you from getting sick, it is unknown at this time if you can still carry and transmit the virus to others after vaccination.

Until more is understood about how well the vaccine works, continuing with precautions such as mask-wearing, physical distancing and washing hands frequently will be important.

**Myth:** More people will die as a result of a negative side effect to the COVID-19 vaccines than would actually die from the virus.

**Fact:** There is a claim circulating on social media that COVID-19's mortality rate is 1%-2% and that people should not be vaccinated against a virus with such a high survival rate. However, a 1% mortality rate is 10 times more lethal than the seasonal flu. In addition, mortality rates can vary widely and are influenced by age, sex and underlying health conditions.

While some people that receive the vaccine may develop symptoms as their immune system responds, remember that this is a common reaction when receiving any vaccine and these symptoms are not considered serious or life-threatening. You cannot get COVID-19 from the COVID-19 vaccines; they are inactivated vaccines, not live vaccines.

It's important to recognize that getting vaccinated for COVID-19 is not just about survival from COVID-19. It's about preventing spread of the virus to others and preventing infection that can lead to long-term negative health effects.

While no vaccine is 100% effective, they are far better than not getting vaccinated. The benefits outweigh the risks in healthy people.

**Myth:** The COVID-19 vaccine was developed as a way to control the general population either through microchip tracking or nano transducers in our brains.

**Fact:** There is no vaccine "microchip," and the vaccine will not track people or gather personal information into a database. This myth started after comments made by Bill Gates from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation about a digital certificate of vaccine records. The technology he was referencing is not a microchip, has not been implemented in any manner, and is not tied to the development, testing or distribution of the COVID-19 vaccine.

**Myth:** The COVID-19 vaccine will alter my DNA.

**Fact:** The first COVID-19 vaccines to reach the market are likely to be messenger RNA (mRNA) vaccines. According to the CDC, mRNA vaccines work by instructing cells in the body how to make a protein that triggers an immune response. Injecting mRNA into your body will not interact or do anything to the DNA of your cells. Human cells break down and get rid of the mRNA soon after they have finished using the instructions.

**Myth:** The COVID-19 vaccines were developed using fetal tissue.

**Fact:** Current mRNA COVID-19 vaccines were not created with and do not require the use of fetal cell cultures in the production process.

More information will be forthcoming as vaccines become available in your area. Even after being vaccinated for COVID-19, you should continue to wear a mask, practice social distancing and wash your hands often. Learn more in Mayo Clinic's FAQs on COVID-19 vaccines. ***(Mayo Clinic News Network)***

# A grandfather's guide to physical fitness

**By JERRY ZEZIMA**
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

As an out-of-shape geezer who drinks red wine to avoid heart trouble and believes that exercise and health food will kill you, I am proud, happy and practically comatose to report that I recently got the best workout I've had in months. And with not one but two personal trainers.

I refer, of course, to my granddaughters.

Because of coronavirus restrictions, I hadn't seen Chloe, 7, and Lilly, 4, since the summer. And we had to wear masks and keep a safe social distance.

My wife, Sue, and I had to do the same this time, when we watched the girls for a couple of hours while their mommy and our younger daughter, Lauren, a talented photographer who has her own business, Lauren Demolaize Photography, was out on a photo shoot.

The fun, frolic and potential cardiac issues included:

Running around the backyard in a spirited and nearly debilitating game of tag.

Playing catch with a rubber ball.

Playing catch with a plastic ball.

Kicking a soccer ball.

Chasing and popping bubbles as they floated through the air.

Writhing spasmodically in a failed effort to keep a hula hoop going for more than three seconds at a time.

Pushing Lilly on a swing, running around to stand in front of her and dashing back to push her again when she said she wasn't going high enough.

Falling to the ground and pretending to be knocked unconscious by Chloe's high-kick swinging.

Sprinting next to the girls as they zoomed down the slide, which they did, one after the other, about a dozen times.

Throwing each girl into the air and catching her while trying not to rupture a vital organ.

And, what we boomers call the sport of kinks, playing horsey, a game in which yours truly was the horse (instead of my usual role as the back end of one). I got down on my hands and knees while both girls jumped on my back and exhorted me to giddyup, which I did, slowly and pathetically, uphill and downhill, until I collapsed in a heap, after which the girls wanted me to give them another ride. As my entire skeletal structure started to crumble, I wondered: They shoot horses, don't they?

Needless to say, but I'll say it anyway, we had a blast. Unbounded exuberance and the narrow avoidance of hospitalization are what happens when grandparents and their grandchildren finally get together after weeks of being separated.

Since we all wore masks and were outside, Sue and I were able to get closer to the girls than we would if we were in the house, but we still had to be careful. The granddaughter tosses and the horsey rides were done while we faced away from each other.

Nonetheless, Chloe and Lilly could run an open-air health club. And I, a hip grandfather hoping not to be a broken-hip grandfather, or even a hip-replacement grandfather, could be their first, best and most ancient customer.

"You're fun, Poppie!" Chloe said as I gasped for air after one of our strenuous exercises.

"Even though you're old!" Lilly added helpfully.

After Lauren returned, Sue and I drove home, where we wolfed down dinner and watched a movie, during which I nodded off so often that I must have looked like a bobblehead doll.

"You got quite a workout today," Sue said as she turned off the TV and we headed up to bed.

"At least you didn't have to call 911," I noted.

"It was like being at the gym," Sue said.

"I hope it's not another several months before I can join," I replied. "And when I do, the girls can push me on a swing and give me a senior citizen discount."

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*Jerry Zezima writes a humor column for Hearst Connecticut Media and is the author of four books. His latest is "Nini and Poppie's Excellent Adventures." Email: JerryZ111@optonline.net. Blog: www.jerryzezima.blogspot.com.*

# Life & Style

## From 'Wonder Woman' to 'Star Wars,' Jenkins' rise continues

AP

This image released by Warner Bros. Entertainment shows director Patty Jenkins, left, with actress Gal Gadot on the set of "Wonder Woman 1984."

Years ago, Chris Pine turned "Wonder Woman" down. Then Patty Jenkins came on board and suddenly without even much of a script he found himself under a kind of spell listening to her vision for the film over a hamburger in Los Angeles' Silverlake neighborhood. His no turned into a yes on the spot.

Jenkins, the 49-year-old "Wonder Woman 1984 " writer-director has in the past few years turned more than one "no" into a "yes." Along the way, she has not only cemented herself in the top echelon of big-budget filmmaking but has also forged new paths for her peers along the way with glass-ceiling shattering budgets, paydays and opportunities. Soon, she'll be the first woman to direct a "Star Wars" film too.

It's no surprise to her cast, who are resoundingly in awe of their director.

"She is the embodiment of exactly what I think one needs to be a good director, which is you have to on one hand be General Patton, you have to be decisive, clear, you have to be a leader. You have to be a multitasker par excellence," Pine said. "And then you also have to be very quiet, observant. You have to be able to observe the people whom you're asking to perform for you in order to key in to precisely the ways in which they need to be talked to or with to get the best from them. She just has an ability to do that that's without peer in many ways."

Pedro Pascal, who has also worked with Jenkins twice now, marveled at her unironic sincerity. It's something that fuels and distinguishes her "Wonder Woman" films from other superhero fare.

"Everything that she does, no matter what the genre is, no matter if it's film or if it's television, if it's independent or if it's big budget, there's always performance and there's always wholeness and richness to the storytelling and unapologetically so," Pascal said. "She doesn't waste any time insisting on being ironic or too cool...it's a kind of visceral honesty that, frankly, is underrated. As highly rated as she is, it's not enough."

But even with box-office receipts and praise, Jenkins still had to fight to prove her worth. In 2017, "Wonder Woman" became the highest-grossing film ever from a solo female director with over $821 million in worldwide ticket sales, proving to skeptics the worth of not just female-fronted superhero films but female-directed ones as well. Although Jenkins was already brainstorming the inevitable sequel, she held out on officially committing to direct until she secured an equitable raise, reportedly in the $7 to $9 million range. It wasn't an uncommon sum for a man in her position, but it was unheard of for a woman. And the ask and public nature of the negotiation didn't come easily.

"I'd never, ever in my life been somebody who talks about money or would have asked for a situation like that to happen to me. However, the movie was extremely successful and I was aware that I was not being paid on par with my peers. And so, you know, it became about something much bigger than me, even though, of course, I'm aware that it's me," Jenkins said. "I found myself saying, if not me, who is going to do this? And so it felt like both a personal thing, but also kind of a duty." ***(AP)***

## British model, fashion muse Stella Tennant dies at 50

**LONDON** (AP)—Stella Tennant, the aristocratic British model who was a muse to designers such as Karl Lagerfeld and Gianni Versace, died suddenly at the age of 50, her family said Wednesday.

Tennant, the granddaughter of a duke, rose to fame in the 1990s while walking the runway for Versace, Alexander McQueen and other designers.

In a statement, her family said: "It is with great sadness we announce the sudden death of Stella Tennant on Dec. 22."

"Stella was a wonderful woman and an inspiration to us all. She will be greatly missed," it said.

The family asked for privacy and said arrangements for a memorial service would be announced later. They did not disclose her cause of death.

Police Scotland said officers were called to an address in the Scottish Borders town of Duns on Tuesday following the sudden death of a 50-year-old woman. Police said there were no suspicious circumstances.

The granddaughter of the 11th Duke of Devonshire Andrew Cavendish and his wife Deborah Mitford of a glamorous, unconventional aristocratic family, Tennant was one of the leading British models of the 1990s.

## 'Club Kid' killer Michael Alig dies; overdose suspected

**NEW YORK** (AP) — Notorious "club kid" killer Michael Alig, who served 17 years in prison for killing his roommate over a drug debt in a case that became a book and film, has died of a suspected drug overdose six years after his release, police said. He was 54.

Alig's death late Thursday or early Friday is being investigated as a possible drug overdose, police said. No official cause had been determined, Aja Worthy-Davis, a spokesperson for the New York City medical examiner's office, said Saturday.

Alig was part of a decadent 1990s party scene characterized by wild costumes and rampant drug use. He pleaded guilty to manslaughter in 1997 for killing Andre "Angel" Melendez.

Alig admitted that he and Robert "Freeze" Riggs killed Melendez, cut the body up and dumped the parts in the Hudson River.

Riggs also pleaded guilty to manslaughter. He was released in 2010.

The story was turned into the 2003 movie "Party Monster," in which Macaulay Culkin played Alig.

Alig maintained a social media presence while behind bars, although he had no access to a computer and dictated tweets to a friend over the prison phone.

## Couple with bright future get on each other's nerves

DEAR ABBY: I know every relationship is different, but how do you know when to stop trying and let go? My boyfriend and I have been dating for a year and a half. Lately all we seem to do is fight or upset each other. I don't want to call it quits, but I'm tired of being angry or sad all the time.

We have been trying to fix our relationship for a while now, but nothing seems to stick. We haven't been able to get professional help due to our financial situation and COVID, but I don't know what else to do.

We have so much potential for having an amazing life and family in the future that I don't want to give up on what could be just because we can't get along right now. Is love enough to help us through this rough patch? Or am I just fooling myself into thinking we can survive together?

LOST IN LOVE IN KANSAS

**DEAR LOST: Many couples—married and not—have been having relationship problems related to the pandemic and the social isolation it has brought. Add financial issues into the mix, and the result has been anxiety, depression and disrupted relationships.**

**These are difficult times, and I hope you and your boyfriend can weather the storm by giving each other the gift of patience and understanding. The answer to your dilemma may be as simple as returning to normal once the pandemic gets under control.**

**DEAR ABBY:** I am a 68-year-old man. Yesterday, my girlfriend and I were in a small gift shop. A young couple was there with a 6-month-old baby in a stroller. I bent down, smiled, winked, waved at the baby and said, "Hi there!" I then told the mother that her baby was beautiful and that I love little kids.

My girlfriend said I was being creepy. I was shocked. I said that she knew I liked kids, and she said yes, she knew that, but that I was still being creepy.

Abby, I have two wonderful, successful adult daughters and always enjoyed having their friends over to our house, which was the place to be back then. I am still stunned at the accusation, but I now wonder. Was I out of line and being "creepy"?

STUNNED IN WASHINGTON

**DEAR STUNNED: There's a double standard for men interacting with children that women don't face. But admiring someone's baby and telling the mother her child is beautiful isn't "creepy." Neither is mentioning that you love kids. Countless people say the same thing in passing, and there's nothing untoward about it.**

**DEAR ABBY:** Is there a respectful way to dispose of funeral memory books that no one is interested in keeping?

CURIOUS DOWNSIZER

**DEAR CURIOUS: Funeral memory books are similar to guest books. Mourners sign them so the grieving family will know who attended the service. If you're familiar with whatever messages were left, there is no need to hang on to them. If you don't wish to keep them, offer them to your local genealogical society, historical society or local archives to see if they would be welcomed.**

*Good advice for everyone – teens to seniors – is in "The Anger in All of Us and How to Deal With It." To order, send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Anger Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)*

### DEAR ABBY

**By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN**
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

*Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.*

# Pastimes

## Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson

## Garfield®

By Jim Davis

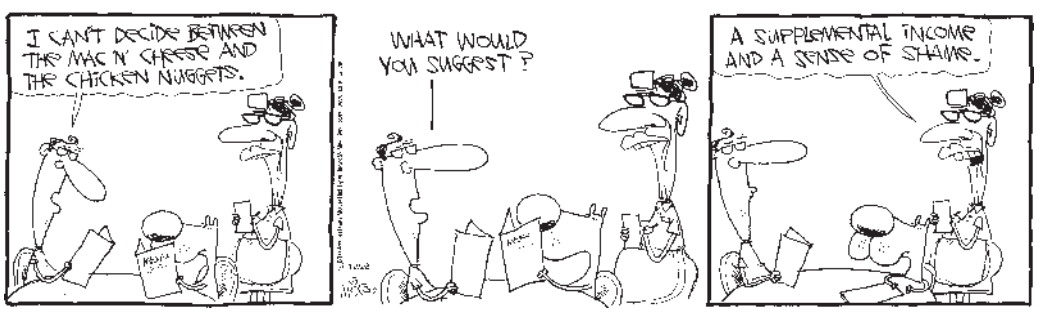
REMEMBER, NOT EVERY GIFT IS GOING TO BE EXACTLY WHAT YOU WANTED...
THE IMPORTANT THING IS TO BE GRACIOUS, AND TO THANK HIM
SO DID YOU LIKE THE DUNG BEETLE?
WHY, YES, THANK YOU!
JIM DAVIS 12-28

## Adam@home

By Bryan Basset

## The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy


I CAN'T DECIDE BETWEEN THE MAC N' CHEESE AND THE CHICKEN NUGGETS.
WHAT WOULD YOU SUGGEST?
A SUPPLEMENTAL INCOME AND A SENSE OF SHAME.

## CROSSWORD

*By Eugene Sheffer*

**ACROSS**

1 Dross
5 Compass dir.
8 Men-only
12 Whine
13 Wee bit
14 Plane-related
15 Oodles
16 Pothole repairers
18 Hawaiian garment
20 Robin's love
21 Nick and Nora's pet
23 Purchase
24 Open car
28 Grocery
31 Be sick
32 Fix a lawn
34 Sportage maker
35 Jazzy Fitzgerald
37 Speed limit indicator
39 — -Cat
41 Jrs.' exam
42 Prevents, legally
45 Using a keyboard
49 Journey by auto
51 Molecule part
52 Overdue
53 "Exodus" hero
54 Incite
55 Stretches (out)
56 Droop
57 Rhone city

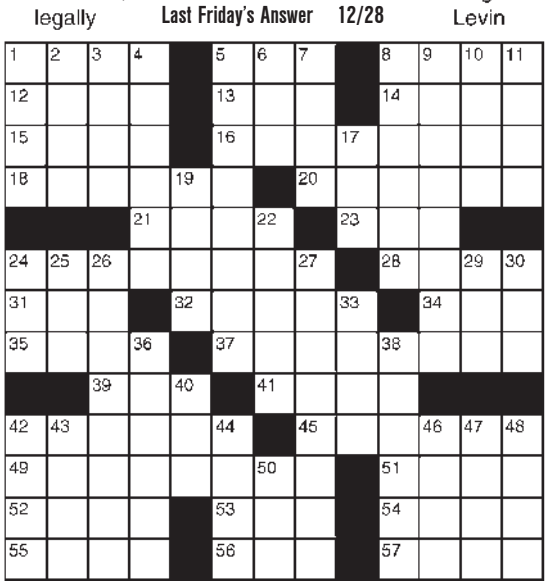
**DOWN**

1 Pesky email
2 Humdinger
3 Matty of baseball
4 Become angry
5 Drum major, for one
6 — Paulo
7 Dutch cheese
8 Pelvic bone
9 Japanese dish
10 Location
11 Prom dress
17 Apply cream
19 Cold War initials
22 Fable writer
24 Singer Carly — Jepsen
25 Tin Man's need
26 Insurance giant
27 Luau entree
29 Fix illegally
30 Sandy color
33 June 6, 1944
36 Battery ends
38 Minnesota's capital
40 Select, with "for"
42 — Stanley Gardner
43 Drench
44 Ladies of Spain (Abbr.)
46 "Doing my best"
47 Scrapped mission
48 Fed. agents
50 Playwright Levin

**Solution time: 26 mins.**

| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| D | E | B | ■ | S | P | A | S | ■ | M | A | Y | A |
| O | T | C | ■ | C | O | L | A | ■ | A | P | E | X |
| J | O | Y | F | U | L | L | Y | ■ | R | O | W | E |
| O | N | S | A | L | E | ■ | W | R | Y | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| ■ | ■ | ■ | H | L | S | ■ | H | A | S | B | R | O |
| G | O | O | E | Y | ■ | P | E | P | ■ | L | A | P |
| J | R | N | S | ■ | M | A | N | ■ | G | O | R | L |
| A | C | E | ■ | S | A | X | ■ | P | E | C | A | N |
| C | H | A | P | E | L | ■ | A | H | S | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| ■ | ■ | ■ | O | T | C | ■ | M | O | S | A | I | C |
| B | E | E | P | ■ | O | D | E | T | C | J | O | Y |
| O | P | I | E | ■ | L | E | N | O | ■ | A | N | A |
| T | A | N | S | ■ | M | E | D | S | ■ | M | S | N |

Last Friday's Answer 12/28



**STUMPED?** For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955!** 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

**CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY:** John Legend, 42; Denzel Washington, 66; Edgar Winter, 74; Dame Maggie Smith, 86.

**Happy Birthday:** Communication will be essential if you want to avoid trouble. Stick to the script, verify the information you receive and avoid emotional spending that can upset your financial status. Carefully look at a change you want to make, and consider how reasonable your expectations are before you begin. Preparation and organization will make differences to the outcome. Protect your health and reputation. Your numbers are 4, 16, 19, 25, 34, 38, 43.

**ARIES** *(March 21-April 19):* Move forward with optimism and the intention of bringing about positive change. Plan your actions carefully, and reach out to people who offer different points of view. A joint venture will lead to greater prosperity. Romance is favored. ✪✪✪✪

**TAURUS** *(April 20-May 20):* Change begins with knowledge, experience and the desire to be current and efficient. Don't let someone's uncertainty hinder your ability to do what's best for you. Don't feel responsible for the incompetence of others. Do what's right. ✪✪✪

**GEMINI** *(May 21-June 20):* Before you begin to celebrate, clear up unfinished business. Deal with people and the problems that are holding you back. Put more effort into what you want. Focus on fitness, preparation and achieving what you set out to do. ✪✪✪

**CANCER** *(June 21-July 22):* Keep your secrets to yourself. Someone will use the information you share against you if given a chance. Be smart, and deal with partnerships fairly. Offer incentives, and the rewards will exceed your expectations. Launch the changes you want to make. ✪✪✪

**LEO** *(July 23-Aug. 22):* Refuse to let what others do or say tilt you in a direction that isn't going to help or define you or what you want to pursue. Be aggressive, and make your decisions clear. Nothing happens overnight, but each step you take matters. ✪✪✪✪

**VIRGO** *(Aug. 23-Sept. 22):* Be direct, say what's on your mind and refuse to get caught in someone's lies or emotional problems. Protect yourself from negativity or risks that can affect your health or emotional well-being. Choose a positive alternative. ✪✪

**LIBRA** *(Sept. 23-Oct. 22):* Don't share your plans with peers. Someone you least expect will leak information that that can hurt your status and reputation. Focus on an opportunity and prepare to work hard to accomplish your goal. A physical change will lift your spirits. ✪✪✪✪✪

**SCORPIO** *(Oct. 23-Nov. 21):* Listen, digest the information and make changes based on legitimate mandates. You have lots to offer and plenty to lose if you don't verify the information. Do the groundwork and consider doing your own thing rather than getting involved in a joint venture. ✪✪✪

**SAGITTARIUS** *(Nov. 22-Dec. 21):* Trust the experience you have to help you ascertain who is in your side Refuse to let vague information or a false implication lead to a mistake. If you want something done, do it yourself. ✪✪✪

## EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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**CAPRICORN** *(Dec. 22-Jan. 19):* Refuse to let someone from your past disrupt your personal life. Consider what will make you happy, and assess what it will take to turn your intentions into something concrete. Don't take a risk with your health or emotional well-being. ✪✪✪

**AQUARIUS** *(Jan. 20-Feb. 18):* Use your energy wisely. Channel your drive into something that will help you advance, not into bailing out someone who doesn't reciprocate. It's time to change your strategy and focus on what makes you happy and brings you closer to your lifelong goal. ✪✪✪✪

**PISCES** *(Feb. 19-March 20):* You'll face difficulties if you get into an emotional situation based on false information. Take a step back and assess whatever problem you face before you initiate a change. Use your intellect and the information you receive wisely. ✪✪

**Birthday Baby:** You are unique, expressive and flexible. You are persuasive and creative.

*Visit Eugenialast.com, or join Eugenia on Twitter/Facebook/LinkedIn. Copyright 2020 Andrews McMeel Syndication*

# SUDOKU

**Conceptis Sudoku** *By Dave Green*

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 7 | | | 9 | 5 | | 3 | |
| | | | | | | | | |
| 4 | | 2 | | 7 | 1 | 6 | | 9 |
| 9 | | 8 | | 4 | | | | |
| 5 | | 3 | | 8 | | 4 | | 6 |
| | | | | 1 | | 5 | | 3 |
| 1 | | 5 | 6 | 3 | | 8 | | 2 |
| | | | | | | | | |
| | 9 | | 8 | 5 | | | 4 | |

Difficulty Level ★ 12/28

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Last Friday's Answer

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 9 | 1 | 8 | 3 | 6 | 4 | 7 | 2 | 5 |
| 6 | 5 | 2 | 1 | 8 | 7 | 3 | 9 | 4 |
| 7 | 4 | 3 | 9 | 2 | 5 | 8 | 1 | 6 |
| 4 | 6 | 9 | 7 | 3 | 8 | 1 | 5 | 2 |
| 2 | 8 | 5 | 4 | 1 | 9 | 6 | 7 | 3 |
| 1 | 3 | 7 | 6 | 5 | 2 | 9 | 4 | 8 |
| 3 | 2 | 4 | 8 | 7 | 1 | 5 | 6 | 9 |
| 8 | 9 | 1 | 5 | 4 | 6 | 2 | 3 | 7 |
| 5 | 7 | 6 | 2 | 9 | 3 | 4 | 8 | 1 |

Difficulty Level ★★★★

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## WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

**HOW TO PLAY:** All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the WONDERWORD.

WHERE DO I KNOW YOU FROM? Solution: 10 letters

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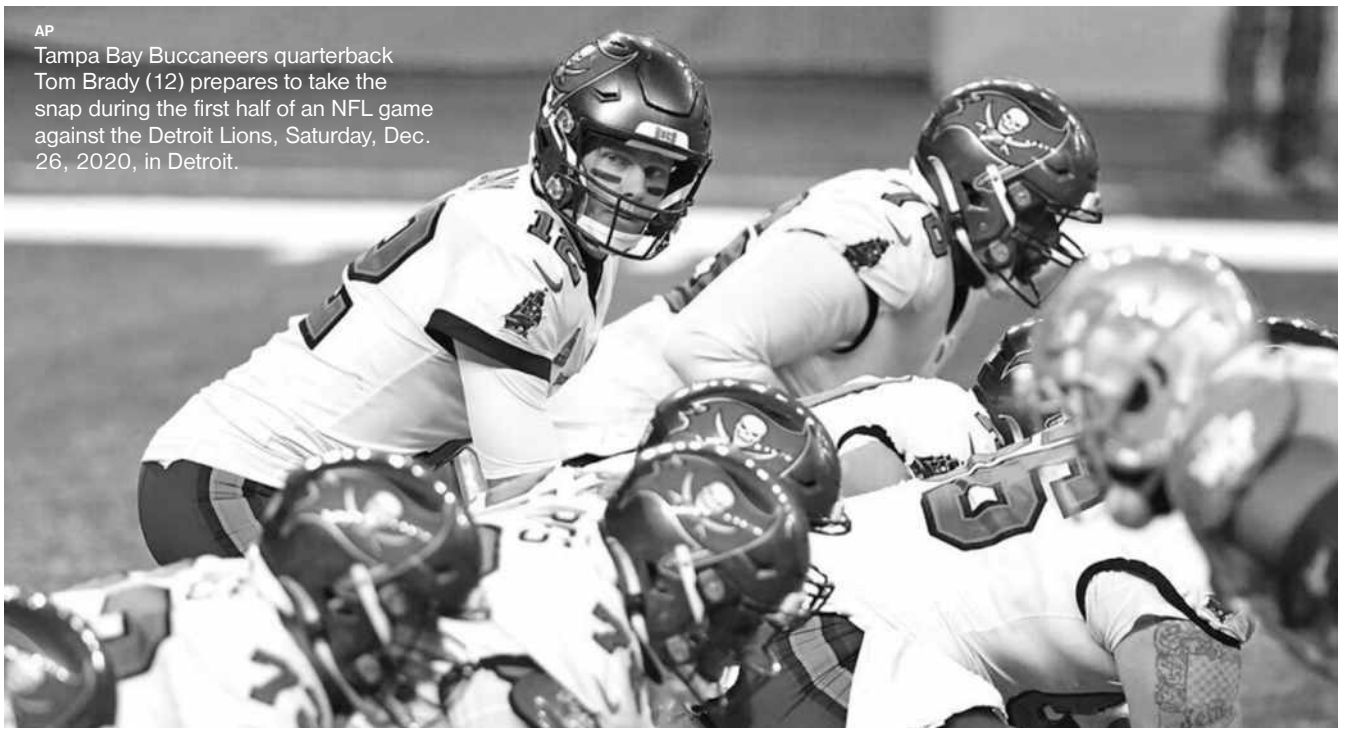
# Brady-led Bucs end 13-year playoff drought



AP
Tampa Bay Buccaneers quarterback Tom Brady (12) prepares to take the snap during the first half of an NFL game against the Detroit Lions, Saturday, Dec. 26, 2020, in Detroit.

**DETROIT** (AP) — Tom Brady was so dominant in Detroit that he could've left Ford Field at halftime to get his favorite chicken wings near the University of Michigan's campus and still made it back to fly to Florida with his team.

Brady threw four touchdown passes in the only half he needed to play and the Tampa Bay Buccaneers went on to rout the Lions 47-7 Saturday, sealing a spot in the playoffs for the first time since 2007.

"When we do play the way we're capable of playing, we're pretty tough to beat," Brady said.

The Bucs (10-5) set a franchise record with 588 yards and snapped the NFL's second-longest postseason drought behind Cleveland's 18-year run that can end Sunday.

"We've been scratching and clawing every single year to make the tournament," said receiver Mike Evans, who was drafted by Tampa Bay six years ago. "It's been a journey and we're happy that we finally accomplished it."

Tampa Bay rested Brady ahead 34-0, its largest halftime lead in franchise history.

Brady was 22 of 27 for 348 yards with a mix of passes deep down the field and darts in traffic. The six-time Super Bowl-winning quarterback threw touchdown passes to Rob Gronkowski, Evans, Chris Godwin, who made a one-handed catch, and Antonio Brown from 33, 27, 7 and 12 yards.

"When we can keep Tom standing, he's going to deliver for us," coach Bruce Arians said.

The 43-year-old Brady, who split time with Drew Henson in college, started his 298th game to tie Brett Favre's record for an NFL quarterback and played in his 300th game.

The Lions (5-10) started the game without interim coach Darrell Bevell along with assistants on the defensive staff because of COVID-19 contact tracing. And they played much of the game without quarterback Matthew Stafford. He was questionable to play with hip and thumb injuries and then hurt his right ankle on the opening drive and did not return.

Chase Daniel struggled to move the ball much for the Lions, who avoided getting shut out for the second time this season when Jamal Agnew returned a punt 74 yards for a touchdown in the third quarter. Daniel was replaced in the fourth by David Blough, an undrafted rookie last year.

"It's obviously tough when you've got a lot of coaches shifting around, but those guys did a great job of getting us ready," Blough said. "No one feels sorry for us.

## 49ers 20, Cardinals 12

Third-string quarterback C.J. Beathard threw three touchdown passes, Jeff Wilson ran for 183 yards, and San Francisco dealt a brutal blow to Arizona's playoff hopes by defeating the Cardinals.

Beathard was making his first start since 2018 and was 1-9 as a starting quarterback before he was pressed into action against Arizona because of injuries to Jimmy Garoppolo and Nick Mullens.

The 27-year-old wasn't amazing but avoided big mistakes. He completed 13 of 22 passes for 182 yards, Wilson earned hard yards on the ground, and the 49ers came up with two big defensive stops late in the fourth quarter, including Ahkello Witherspoon's interception of Kyler Murray's pass in the end zone with about five minutes left.

Murray suffered an apparent right leg injury on the Cardinals' final play of the game. He was hit by the 49ers' Alex Barrett after making a throw as the Cardinals tried to rally in the closing seconds. Murray's fourth-down throw fell incomplete, clinching San Francisco's victory, and he rolled over in pain.

Murray lay on the field as Arizona's trainers attended to him and limped off the field after a couple of minutes. He appeared to be in considerable pain on the Cardinals' bench and lingered there before heading off to the locker room.

The Cardinals (8-7) no longer control their own destiny in the playoff race. If the Chicago Bears win their final two games, they will reach the playoffs because of a tiebreaker over the Cardinals.

## Dolphins 26, Raiders 25

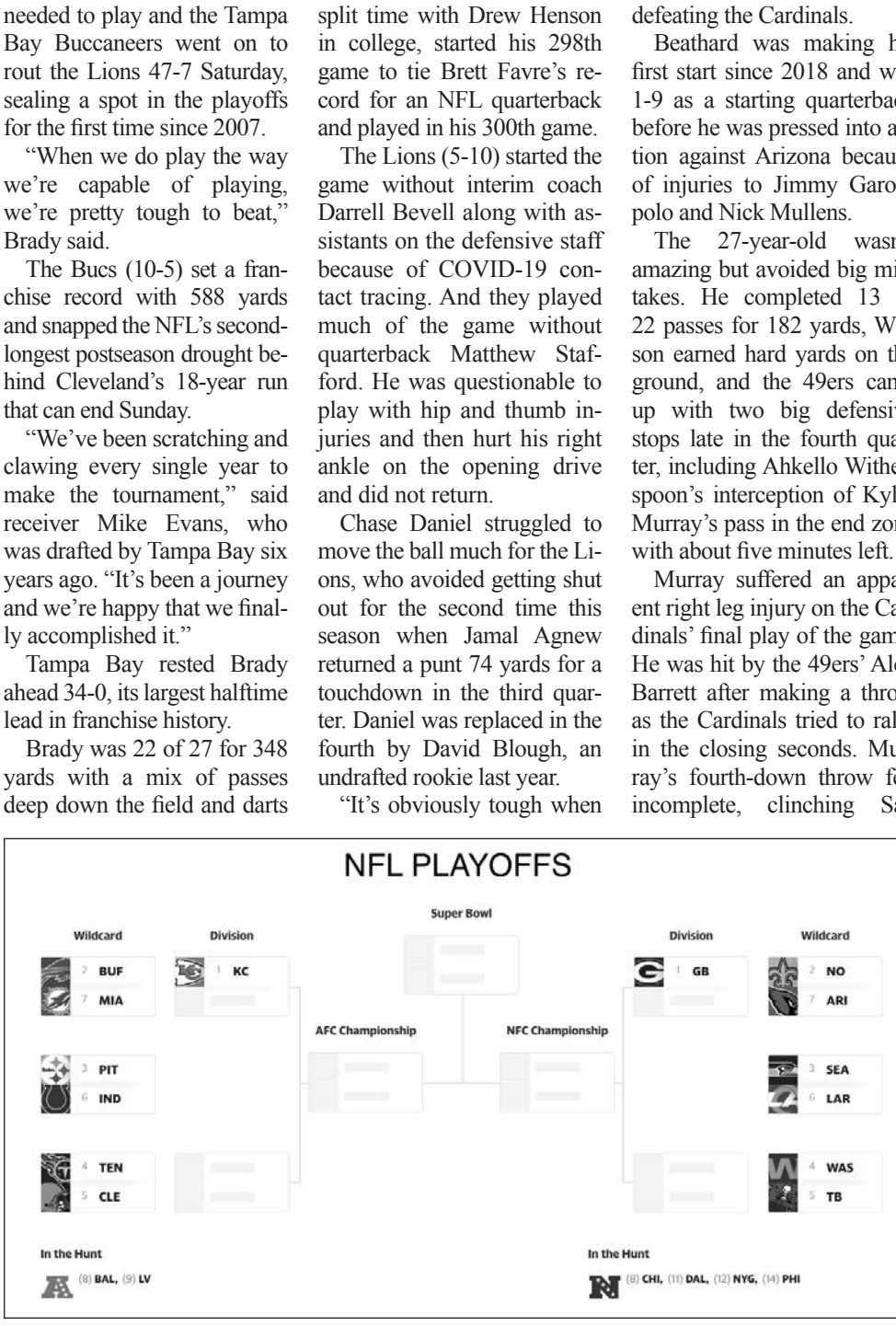
In a wild final 10 minutes, the Miami Dolphins benched their quarterback, committed a critical defensive penalty, and allowed an 85-yard TD.

And they won saving their playoff hopes in what has been a crazy season.

The Las Vegas Raiders appeared to be ready to beat Miami and remain in the playoff race after Daniel Carlson's field goal gave them a 25-22 lead with 19 seconds left.

But the Raiders committed a terrible facemask and allowed a 34-yard catch in the final seconds to improbably blow the lead.

Ryan Fitzpatrick replaced a healthy Tua Tagovailoa with just under 10 minutes left and the Dolphins down only 16-13. And all Fitzpatrick did in three drives was throw for 182 yards and a TD, keeping Miami's playoff hopes very much alive.



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# Magic spoil Westbrook's historic night

**WASHINGTON** (AP) —The Orlando Magic beat Washington 130-120 on Saturday night, overcoming another triple-double by Russell Westbrook in his home debut for the Wizards.

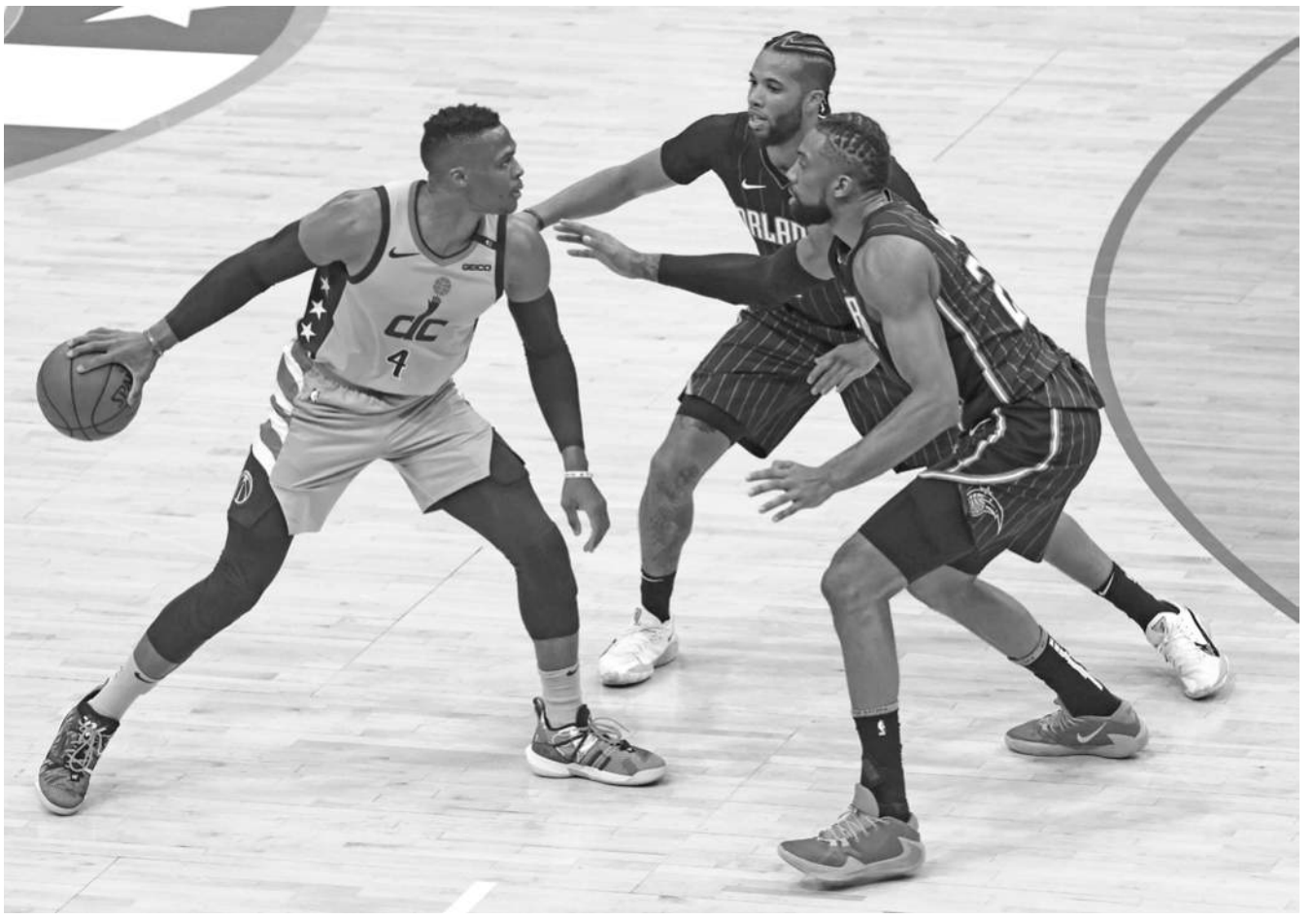
Westbrook had 15 points, 15 rebounds and 12 assiststo become the fourth player in NBA history to record a triple-double in his team's first two games. Magic Johnson (twice), Jerry Lucas, and Oscar Robertson previously accomplished the feat. Westbrook is the first player to do it with a new team after being acquired from Houston in the off-season for John Wall.

Terrence Ross scored 25 points to lead Orlando. Nikola Vucevic had 22 points and 17 rebounds, and Markelle Fultz added 21 points to help the Magic win its second straight to start the season.

Bradley Beal had 39 points for the Wizards, while Thomas Bryant had 19.

Westbrook, who averaged a triple-double three straight seasons from 2016-17 to 2018-19 with Oklahoma City, had just two points at the half finished shooting 6 for 19 from the field.

Washington has lost two straight to open the season.



AP

Washington Wizards guard Russell Westbrook (4) holds the ball as Orlando Magic guard Michael Carter-Williams (7) and center Khem Birch (24) defend in the second quarter of an NBA game Saturday, Dec. 26, 2020, in Washington.

### Trail Blazers 128, Rockets 126 OT

All-Star guard James Harden led the way for Houston with 44 points (55% FG) and 17 assists, while new starting center Christian Wood had a remarkable debut with 31 points (64% FG) and 13 rebounds.

Yet, because of a similarly epic showing by Trail Blazers guard CJ McCollum, Portland survived Houston in overtime. It was the first game of the 2020-21 regular season for the Rockets (0-1), while the Blazers evened their record at 1-1. McCollum scored 44 and hit a career-high nine shots from 3-point range.

### Thunder 109, Hornets 107

Shai Gilgeous-Alexander knocked down a go-ahead jumper with 1.4 seconds left and finished with 24 points, helping the Oklahoma City Thunder hold off a furious rally by the Charlotte Hornets to win their season opener.

The Thunder led by 13 with 1:50 to go, but Miles Bridges spurred Charlotte with 11 of his 14 points in the final 1:06—including a trio of 3s in the last 25 seconds. His final 3 tied it at 107 with 10.3 seconds left.

Gilgeous-Alexander then took the inbound pass, brought the ball up the floor and pulled up from 23 feet to drain a contested jumper over Caleb Martin from the top of the key.

### 76ers 109, Knicks 89

Joel Embiid had 27 points and 10 rebounds while remaining unbeaten at Madison Square Garden, and the Philadelphia 76ers beat the New York Knicks.

Ben Simmons had 15 points, nine rebounds and six assists while alo leading the defensive effort that forced New York's RJ Barrett into a miserable shooting performance. Embiid and Simmons have never dropped a game at MSG and the Sixers have won the last 13 meetings overall.

### Hawks 122, Grizzlies 12

Trae Young scored eight straight points down the stretch and finished with 36 points as the Atlanta Hawks beat the Memphis Grizzlies.

Kevin Huerter added 21 points for the Hawks, who won their second straight. De'Andre Hunter finished with 15 points and rookie Nathan Knight added 14 points.

Ja Morant led Memphis with 28 points and seven assists.

### Cavaliers 128, Pistons 119 2OT

Collin Sexton scored 32 points and three of his teammates had at least 21 points, helping the Cleveland Cavaliers beat the Detroit Pistons in two overtimes

The Cavs took advantage of Detroit wasting opportunities to win in regulation and the first overtime, improving to 2-0 and dropping the Pistons to 0-2.

### Pacers 125, Bulls 107

Domantas Sobonis had 22 points, 11 assists and 10 rebounds, and the Indiana Pacers used big scoring runs in the second and third quarters to cruise to a 125-106 victory over the Chicago Bulls.

T.J. Warren scored 23 points and Victor Oladipo added 22 as Indiana beat its Central Division rivals for a 10th straight time, including five straight at the United Center.

### Raptors 119, Spurs 114

DeMar DeRozan had 27 points and the San Antonio Spurs rallied in the final minute to beat the Toronto Raptors.

DeRozan's 3-pointer with a minute remaining pulled the Spurs within 114-113, and they took a 115-114 lead on LaMarcus Aldridge's fadeaway put-back with 29.9 seconds remaining.

Toronto's Kyle Lowry missed a pull-up 19-footer with 22.3 seconds left, and Rudy Gay made two free throws at the other end.

### Timberwolves 116, Jazz 111

Tough defense is becoming a crucial part of Minnesota's basketball identity.

That was evidenced by what the Timberwolves did in the closing seconds of their 116-111 victory over Utah.

The Jazz had a chance to set up a tying 3-pointer and force overtime with 4.2 seconds left. Minnesota did not even let it get to that point.

### Kings 106, Suns 103

De'Aaron Fox had 24 points and seven assists, Richaun Holmes and Buddy Hield combined for five free throws in the final two minutes and the Sacramento Kings held off the Phoenix Suns.

Marvin Bagley III added 13 points and 11 rebounds, Harrison Barnes had 11 points and 11 rebounds and Hield finished with 14 points for Sacramento.

Devin Booker scored 26 points for Phoenix. Chris Paul had 22 points and 12 assists.

## LeBron wins AP Male Athlete of Year award

**LOS ANGELES** (AP)—LeBron James told the world in 2020 that Black Lives Matter. He helped convince many who had never voted to finally head to the polls. He found more ways to continue elevating the lives of people in his hometown.

If that weren't enough, he won another NBA championship.

James' on-court performance this year was spectacular again. A fourth NBA title and fourth NBA Finals MVP trophy were his, as he lifted the Los Angeles Lakers back atop the basketball world. And after a year where he was brilliant, on the court and off, James was announced Saturday as the winner of The Associated Press' Male Athlete of the Year award for a record-tying fourth time.

"I still know what I do on the floor and obviously, I give everything to the game," James told AP. "But I can make a greater impact off the floor right now, more than I can on the floor. And I want to continue to inspire people with the way I play the game of basketball. But there's so many more things that I can do off the floor to help cultivate people, inspire people, bring people together, empower them."

The AP award was first given out in 1931. James' fourth win matched Lance Armstrong and Tiger Woods for the most by men. Three women have won the AP award at least four times; Babe Didrikson was a six-time winner, Serena Williams has won five and Chris Evert four.

The AP's Female Athlete of the Year will be announced Sunday.

No NBA player scored more points or had more assists in 2020 than James. The only other player in his lifetime to lead the league in points and assists in the same calendar year? Himself, in 2018.

James also became the first player to be NBA Finals MVP for three franchises. He moved past Kobe Bryant for No. 3 on the all-time scoring list, doing so one day before Bryant died last January in a helicopter crash; the last tweet Bryant sent was a congratulatory message to James.

"He's the greatest player the basketball universe has ever seen," Lakers coach Frank Vogel said of James in October. "And if you think you know, you don't know until you're around him every day, you're coaching him, you're seeing his mind, you're seeing his adjustments, seeing the way he leads the group. You think you know. You don't know."

James finished with 78 points in voting by a panel of 35 AP customers and editors. Kansas City quarterback and reigning Super Bowl MVP Patrick Mahomes was a narrow second with 71 points. Formula One seven-time champion Lewis Hamilton was a distant third with 14 points.

James—also the AP's male athlete of this past decade—also won the yearly AP award in 2013, 2016 and 2018. Michael Jordan, a three-time winner, is the only other basketball player to win the AP award more than once.

"He's one of the greatest leaders in sports," Lakers guard Kyle Kuzma said of James.

That applies on and off the court.

James' More Than A Vote organization drew more than 42,000 volunteers to work at polling stations for the November election, helped some earn back their voting rights and pushed for turnout among Black and young voters.

Black voters made up 11% of the national electorate, and 9 in 10 of them supported President-elect Joe Biden, according to AP VoteCast, a survey of more than 110,000 voters nationwide. When compared to Hillary Clinton in 2016, Biden drew more voters in critical areas with large Black populations — such as NBA cities like Detroit, Milwaukee and Atlanta. That proved massive.

He also focused, as always, on his hometown of Akron, Ohio.

The I PROMISE School he opened in 2018 now has over 450 students in third through sixth grades. When the pandemic shut down then school, James and his team ensured students got hot meals delivered to their homes—even complete Thanksgiving meals. An affordable housing project for 50 families broke ground this year. And this month, plans for House Three Thirty (a nod to Akron's area code) were announced, detailing how James is going to offer things like accessible family financial health programming, job training and a community gathering space.

## ROLLERS

*From Page 20*

Lerio was named Finals MVP, while Mercado took the season MVP and best in assist award. Lucero also bagged two individual awards after topping the rebounds and steals department, while Xue ruled the blocks category.

Meanwhile, the boys U17 and U19 championships are still up for grabs, along with the women's division crown. Playoff matches in the U17 and U19 were played yesterday afternoon, while the Lady Ol'Aces and Baby Ol'Aces disputed the women's championship last night, but results were unavailable at press time.

**Rollers Red 38**—Lerio 17, Mercado 11, Xue 6, Navarro 4.

**Rollers Blue 31**—Lucero 14, Eriich 7, Villagomez 6, Sano 2, Enriquez 2.

**Scoring by halves:** 19-13, 38-31

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Rollers Red coach Joe Diaz, second left, poses with his players and their awards after winning the boys U13 division of the Rollers 2020 Holiday Tournament yesterday at the Koblerville Gymnasium.

## Reports: Messi, Dele to PSG; Sabitzer to Tottenham

**FRANCE**—In the latest transfer news, Lionel Messi to PSG and Dele Alli to PSG are making the headlines, while Marcel Sabitzer to Tottenham is also among the reports.

Let's start in Paris, as big changes are on the way with Thomas Tuchel fired and Mauricio Pochettino lined up to replace him.

With that in mind, Les Parisien claim that Pochettino has a few transfer targets lined up and Lionel Messi to PSG could happen.

It was already believed that Messi, 33, was keen on a move to PSG before Pochettino's imminent arrival, but this could put them ahead of Manchester City in the intense battle to sign the Argentine legend who will become a free agent next summer.

Imagine Messi, Neymar and Kylian Mbappe at PSG, with a high-pressing midfield and defense behind them!? C'est magnifique.

A separate report from The Sun states that Alli, 24, will also be one of Pochettino's first targets when he takes over at PSG.

The England international has been linked with a loan move to PSG in January on many occasions before Pochettino arrived, and Dele Alli is certainly out of the picture at Tottenham.

After a small mistake in the build up to a goal from Stoke City against Tottenham in the League Cup in midweek, Mourinho slammed Dele Alli and singled him out as he said he must do better. It seems like the end for Alli at Tottenham is near, and Pochettino always got the best out of him so this move would surely suit everyone.

Dele Alli playing for Mourinho at Tottenham never seemed like a good fit, as the silky playmaker is a luxury player and Mourinho has Harry Kane and Heung-min Son to lead his attack.

As for incomings at Tottenham, it is believed that Jose Mourinho wants to add RB Leipzig midfielder Marcel Sabitzer.

According to the report from the Daily Mail, Sabitzer is a $60 million January transfer target for Mourinho.

The versatile player shone against Spurs in the UEFA Champions League last season and he is a perfect Mourinho player, as he can play in multiple positions, is trustworthy and will make other players around him better.

He also provides a goal threat and at times Tottenham's midfield has looked a little lacking in creativity as Son and Kane have been cut off up top.

Sabitzer, 26, can provide a little bit of everything and that would suit Spurs well. ***(NBC)***

## AGAPE

*From Page 20*

in the youth division.

Agape C's Allen Luo, Jason Cao, Abraham Zhu, Caleb Dai, and Eunice Xu took the first place honors in the group after recording 1:30:50. Hudson Tan, David Zhao, Eric Chen, Alex Liang, and Emma Pang of Agape D clocked in at 1:33:34 to rank second, while Team Santa completed the Top 3. Cross country champion Kaithlynn Chavez and soccer players Kohtaro Goto, Markus Toves, Jerald Aquino, and Akira Kadokura are the members of Team Santa and completed the race in 1:33:36.

Meanwhile, though last Saturday's event was a team competition, there were a couple of runners who ran the course solo, including barefoot runner Chang Whan Jang and former NMI national team member Tania Tan (both competed the course under the two-hour mark).

NMA would like to thank all the participants and sponsors of the island relay and the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force for allowing the event to take place and ensuring everyone's safety. NMA had runners leaving the starting line in Pacific Islands Club in San Antonio in two batches to avoid overcrowding.

"Thank you all for making this year ACIR 2020 another success. Despite the ongoing challenges with the global pandemic, we are fortunate to be able to put on our last event for the season. On behalf of NMA and its leadership, I would like to say special thank you to the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and all the first responders and front-liners for keeping our community safe and healthy," NMA secretary general and race director Robin Sapong said.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Leilani Ruszala passes Noel Altamirano, as she proceeds to tag her teammate during last Saturday's Northern Marianas Athletics Annual Christmas Island Relay.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Moshe Sikkel of Saipan Swim Club leads his teammates to the finish line.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Team Santa Claus runners keep a steady pace on their way to the finish line.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Saipan Paddling Club runners near the finish line at the Last Command Post.

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# Rollers Red takes U13 title

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
roselyn_monroyo@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Rollers Red clinched the boys U13 championship in the Rollers 2020 Holiday Tournament after outclassing Rollers Blue in the finals, 38-31, yesterday at the Koblerville Gymnasium.

Lance Lerio and Mykee Mercado teamed up in handling Rollers Red the division crown after scoring in double figures in title showdown. Lerio delivered 17 points, while Mercado chipped in 11.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Rollers Red's Mykee Mercado, center, challenges the defense of Rollers Blue's Rance Surla during their title game in the boys U13 division of the Rollers 2020 Holiday Tournament yesterday at the Koblerville Gymnasium.

Mercado and Lerio each fired 9 points in the first half to put Rollers Red on top, 19-13. Mercado got all his first half baskets from downtown, while Lerio made three field goals and three charities to give Rollers Red a 6-point cushion at the break.

Rollers Blue, despite falling behind, remained in contention after the first half, thanks to Christian Lucero and Franklin Eriich, who combined for 11 points in the opening frame.

In the second half, Lucero was still on target, but Eriich was held to a field goal, bringing down the Rollers Red's chances to overhaul the deficit.

Mercado was also limited to one basket in the second half, but Lerio knocked in four field goals and drew help from Jezpher Navarro and William Xue to keep Rollers Red in the driver's seat en route to the title win.

See ROLLERS on Page 19

# Agape extends reign in island relay

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
roselyn_monroyo@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

For the sixth straight year, Agape Christian School runners emerged as the top finishers in the Northern Marianas Athletics Annual Christmas Island Relay.

Captain Simon Shan, lead runner Ray Qi, Eason Tang, Peter Hu and Samuel He of Agape Team A completed the 13.7-mile race from Pacific Islands Club in San Antonio to the Last Command Post in Marpi in 1:25:38, finishing ahead of more than 20 teams that participated in NMA's season-ending event last Saturday morning.

Agape A took the open division title, reaching the finish line nearly six minutes faster than Crackers and Jack, which had Jack "Ketson" Kabiriel, Keith Longuski, Travis Spaeth, and father-and-son Tom and Miles Linden as members. The runner-up squad timed in at 1:31:21. Rounding out the Top 3 in the division was another Agape quintet—Peter Shen, Antonio Li, Timothy Yu, Jim Qui, and Alice Yang.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO
Agape Christian School A runners do the celebratory jump to the finish line after topping last Saturday's Northern Marianas Athletics Annual Christmas Island Relay.

Crackers and Jack runners head to the finish line at the Last Command Post. ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Agape B checked in at 1:32:54.

Agape A's time in this year's race from the southern to the northern part of the island is the third fastest in the Torchebearers' six-year reign in the competition. The best record was made in 2018 with Willian Chen, Kobe Yang, Peter Wang, Jonathan Xiong, and Arthur Liang submitting 1:23:35. Last year, Agape posted 1:25:27, while coach Kok Pang's top runners registered 1:26:30 in 2017, 1:27:42 in 2016, and 1:29:42 in 2015. The event's all-time record was under 1:20:00.

"Every year, our goal is to break our school record. We fell short this year, but we will try again next year," said Pang.

With Agape on a roll in the island relay, Pang acknowledged that every team wants to end their domination and that is an added challenge to their runners.

"We accept the challenge. It pushes our runners to keep working hard and persevere even though they may be exhausted from doing how many races before competing in the island relay," Pang added.

Agape just completed the four-series interscholastic cross country season that concluded early this month, while some of its runners also joined virtual races.

Pang hopes that Agape's dominance in the island relay in the past several years will also serve as a challenge to other runners.

"Competition is good because it keeps you motivated. I hope other runners/teams will remain motivated in beating our runners and continue raising the race standard on island," the Agape coach added.

Meanwhile, Agape also had two teams placing in the Top 3

See AGAPE on Page 19